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THE
RUIN AND RECOVERY
OF
MAN.

A
SERIES OF DISCOURSES
ON THE
DISTINGUISHING DOCTRINES
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

BY ALEXANDER PROUDFIT, A. M.
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL SALEM.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

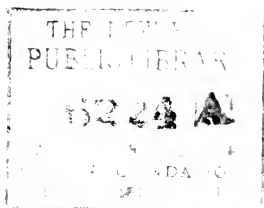
ROMANS, v. 20.

And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life ; and this life is in his son.... 1 JOHN v. 11.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.... GAL. VI. 14.

SALEM, (N. Y.)

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PREFACE.

THE following discourses were prepared for the pulpit during the summer of 1804, with little expectation of being afterwards offered from the press. The author, since that time, has been frequently called to itinerate through the frontier settlements, and, in these occasional visits, was constrained sincerely to deplore their desolate condition. Many of them are destitute of gospel ordinances regularly dispensed on the sabbath, neither are they furnished with practical books for their instruction and edification through the week. From this acquaintance with their desolate situation in a spiritual sense he has been led frequently and anxiously to enquire what means might be adopted for ministering to their relief. Willingly he *would impart some spiritual gift, to the end they might be established* and finally saved. Such were the motives by which he was induced to venture the publication of the following discourses. The subjects, however imperfectly discussed, are without doubt infinitely interesting; and the plan he humbly hopes, is calculated in some measure for the edification of the frontier inhabitants. There is an attempt to exhibit the great doctrines of christianity in their connection with each other, which renders the work suitable for those who enjoy not the means of systematic instruction. Divine grace appears rearing her splendid edifice on the

ruins of human apostacy ; we behold her occupied from eternity past in laying the foundation, gradually carrying on the superstructure in time, notwithstanding infinite opposition, and at last completing the building amidst the mingled shouts of men and angels, GRACE, GRACE *unto it.*

THE author frankly acknowledges that nothing new is contained in this volume, and he may with equal freedom assert that nothing new is affected. The corruptions of the natural man are the same now that they were in centuries past, and his salvation must be promoted by the instrumentality of the same word of the living God illustrated and applied. Sinners, through the sovereign operations of Jehovah the Spirit, must be awakened by the same law revealed in its terrors, and encouraged by the same gospel exhibited in its consolations by which they were either awakened or encouraged in the age of apostles and reformers. *Faith yet must come by hearing or reading, and this hearing or reading exclusively by the simple, unaffected word of God.* The gospel must still *be preached, not with the wisdom of human words, lest the cross of Christ be made of none effect ;* the moment that the doctrines of the ministry of reconciliation lose their native simplicity, they lose both their efficacy and glory.

ALTHOUGH the subjects, illustrated in the following pages, have often occupied the pen of

controversy, yet I have cautiously avoided entering the field. To have stated and answered the various objections must necessarily have swelled the work to an immoderate size, and might in a great measure have defeated the design of the publication. My intention was not to contend with the adversaries of our salvation, but if possible, by a plain exhibition of the truth to espouse sinners to the Saviour and advance his own children *to the measure of the stature of his fulness*. The apprehension that any doctrine contained in this volume should prove offensive to a professed follower of the Lamb is unutterably painful; it is peculiarly humiliating that with the same bible before our eyes we should entertain sentiments widely different in matters which concern our common welfare. *But as I firmly believe, I have freely spoken and written.* With respect to those who may not assent to all the truths here delivered, I have one request which is made with the purest friendship; before they reject a single principle, let it be deliberately and impartially compared with the unerring oracle: if it is not confirmed by *a thus saith Jehovah*, I ask them not to believe; but if it appears supported by this high authority, it is dangerous in the extreme to reject it. *Let God be true, and every man or angel a liar* that dares to contradict him.

I HAVE only to lament that the work is not ex-

ecuted in a manner more worthy of its importance ; but I have this confidence and consolation that it is *not by might, nor by power, but by the SPIRIT of the LORD OF HOSTS* : it is neither elegance of diction, nor propriety of arrangement, nor even energy of argument which secures efficacy to the means, but Jehovah's blessing ; and this blessing easily can, and frequently does make *foolish things to confound the wise, and weak things to confound the mighty, and even things that are not to bring to naught things that are ; that no flesh should glory in his presence.* To his sovereign, almighty operations, the author now fervently recommends it ; should Israel's God, in his abundant mercy, render it effectual for the conversion of a single sinner, or the establishment of a dear child in the spiritual family, he would most cordially mingle his note in the general song of salvation, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake.—AMEN.*

SALEM, Sept. 13, 1806.

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THE RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MAN.

Sermon I.

*The Doctrines of Revelation, although mysterious,
ought to be Preached.*

1 COR. ii. 7.

WE SPEAK THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY.

THE recovery of man from the reproach and wretchedness of his apostacy is a work not more interesting in its consequences than mysterious in its nature. The contrivance and the execution of a plan, by which transgression is punished, and yet the transgressor pardoned; the majesty of the Sovereign vindicated, and yet the rebel admitted to his favor and friendship; sin exposed in all its malignities and horrors, and yet the sinner restored to a greater elevation of blessedness and glory than he had forfeited, furnishes a display not only of power omnipotent, but of wisdom the most profound and unsearchable. *These things the angels desire to look into.*

THE very prophets and apostles, who were divinely inspired to reveal the method of human redemption, neither did, nor could fully comprehend it ; although their lips, directed unerringly by the spirit of wisdom, announced the doctrines of salvation, their understandings were unable to trace them in all their connections and consequences. *Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you : Searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.* The sovereignty of Jehovah in passing by the nobler nature of angels, and determining the recovery of man ; his wisdom in concerting a scheme by which the honors of his government are secured, and our perishing race restored ; his love in procuring our reconciliation at an expence so great as the death of an ONLY SON ; the restoration of the sinner to spiritual life, and his perseverance in grace ; amidst legions of adversaries, more powerful than himself, were to these inspired men sources of sublime astonishment and praise.

THE author of this epistle, although *the chiefest of the apostles*, although enlightened beyond any by a more abundant unction of the Holy Ghost, is frequently lost in attempting to explore this fathomless depth : he acknowledges these

myſteries of godlineſs as ſurpaſſing all expreſſion and comprehension ; *Which none of the princes of this world knew ; as it is written, eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man to conceive them.* But was he afraid or aſhamed to announce what he was unable fully to underſtand ? Did he eſteem it any reproach to confeſs that the movements of the INFINITE, ETERNAL MIND lay beyond the reach of the finite, contracted conceptions of mortals ? No : The conſideration that his meſſage was myſterious ſerved only to excite his rejoicing and glorying. *I am not aſhamed of the goſpel of Chriſt. We ſpeak the wiſdom of God in a myſtery.*

By this *wiſdom of God in a myſtery*, ſome underſtand the introduction of the Gentiles to the privileges of the goſpel. It was a myſtery to the Jews, that the nations of the world, who had been long and deeply ſunk in idolatry ; who had been permitted, during the period of many thouſand years, to continue *aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and ſtrangers from the covenants of promiſe*, ſhould now be brought within the pale of the church, placed in all reſpects on a level with the offspring of Abraham, and become equal ſharers with them in all the privileges of grace and glory. The apoſtle thus addreſſes himſelf to the Ephesian church, *He made known to me the myſtery ; That the Gentiles ſhould*

be fellow-heirs, and of the same body and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.

OTHERS, *by this wisdom of God in a mystery*, understand the incarnation of the Son of God, and our reconciliation to the divine favor, by the blood of his cross. This view of the passage is supported by the verses immediately following : *Which, mystery, none of the princes of this world knew ; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.*

ALTHOUGH neither of these significations are altogether rejected, yet *this wisdom of God* may be considered in a sense more extensive, and as comprehending the whole counsel of God ; all those *treasures of wisdom and knowledge* which were first committed to the apostles as stewards in the spiritual family, and through them to the ministers of reconciliation in different ages. The gospel with its doctrines is emphatically called *the wisdom of God*, as it affords to all rational worlds the most astonishing display of Jehovah's prudence and knowledge : There he appears bringing the greatest good out of the greatest evil ; perfect order out of the darkest confusion, and overruling the sin of man to issue in a more abundant revenue of glory to himself and happiness to his redeemed. It is called *the wisdom of God IN A MYSTERY*, because the truths therein revealed are beyond the comprehension of the

most enlarged mind. The reason of mortals could never have discovered these truths unless revealed, and even after they are revealed, it is insufficient fully to comprehend them. However unmeaning, or uninteresting these doctrines may appear to some who are either too ignorant to understand, or too obstinate to acknowledge their excellence, yet by these are *made known to principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God* ; these exalted spirits have been long and ardently searching into the *mysteries of Godliness*, but have been unable to explore them : the line of their created intellect is too short to fathom this profound : although nearly six thousand years have elapsed since these higher orders of being commenced their research into the wonders of redemption, yet upon each new contemplation they are constrained to exclaim with greater transports of admiration and joy, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ; For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor ; For of him, and through him, and to him are all things ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

THE meaning of this passage appears evidently to be the following ; that, in the everlasting gospel, there are doctrines profoundly mysterious, utterly beyond our comprehension ; yet these doctrines, however mysterious, ought to be

openly and boldly proclaimed by the ministers of Jesus.

WITHOUT pursuing any formal division of this subject, I shall aim at enumerating some parts of *this wisdom of God*, which it is our duty, as ambassadors of Christ, to announce, although they may be truly mysterious and incomprehensible.

1. THE existence of Three Persons in the same undivided Essence constitutes a part of this wisdom or counsel revealed in the gospel. The being of a God is evident from the light of nature. There is perhaps not a nation under heaven, however rude and idolatrous, without some impressions of a Divine Being, and some form of worship expressing their dependence upon him. Reason, even unenlightened by revelation, suggests that there must be some "first cause" which produced all other causes ; some uncreated, eternal BEING which gave existence to all other beings ; yet reason ascends no higher ; although she may infer that there must be a God, it is peculiar to revelation to teach the manner of his existence ; that in Jehovah there are three persons, all distinct from each other, and yet essentially and indivisibly one ; each sustaining his peculiar office both in creation and redemption, and yet each concurring and operating with the others. *There are three that bare record in hea-*

ven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one.

THIS part of the wisdom of God is, *without controversy*, an unsearchable mystery ; that there should be three persons existing in one Jehovah ; each subsisting distinct from the other, and yet one in essence, and perfection, and glory ; so really one that in holding fellowship with either, we hold fellowship with the other two ; in ascribing worship to one, we offer worship to all ; and in despising either we pour contempt upon all ; and yet these adorable persons are so perfectly distinct that they assume different names, and sustain different offices : this doctrine although infinitely mysterious must be taught ; it is like the foundation of all other revealed doctrines and intimately concerns us as men and as christians. Redemption may be compared to a theatre on which we behold each divine person assuming a distinct, particular office and acting a distinct, particular part. The Father is introduced as proposing the recovery of man ; devising a scheme by which the glories of the Godhead might be secured, and our nature promoted to greater dignity and joy than if sin had not entered ; he then solemnly ordains his own Son as Mediator, imputes to him the transgressions of his people, consecrates him Lord of the new creation and promises him many sons and daughters as a reward for his humiliation : we find the

Son, co-equal, co-eternal with the Father, cordially acquiescing in the plan proposed, offering to assume the nature of man although degraded by sin, paying down the price demanded, and thus obtaining eternal redemption for his people. The Holy-Ghost, the third person in the ever-blessed Jehovah, undertakes to finish the scheme of our salvation, to take possession of the elect soul in the midst of its abominations, to renew and sanctify it throughout, and render it a fit inhabitant of the heavenly sanctuary. Such is the doctrine of revelation respecting the Trinity of persons in the God head; and to conceal this truth would be to throw a veil over the glories of redemption; to deny the essential existence of either, or their immediate agency in our salvation would be like knocking a pillar from beneath a building, the whole fabric must totter and fall.

2. THE unlimited dominion which Jehovah exercises over all his creatures; that absolute, independent, adorable sovereignty with which he disposes of them and their actions for the advancement of his own glory is also a part of *this wisdom* revealed in the gospel. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all.* Every being whether rational or irrational; *whether visible or invisible* from the loftiest angel in heaven to the least atom which floats in the air, or the least insect which moves upon the earth is open to his view, up-

held by his power, and controuled by his sovereign pleasure ; his will is the absolute rule, and his glory the ultimate end of all their actions.— If a sparrow ascends from earth to heaven his power raises it ; if it falls from heaven to earth his pleasure permits it : does an angel leave his mansion in glory for the purpose of ministering to an *heir of salvation*, he is *sent forth* to that employment, his commission is received from the high court of heaven : does a Cyrus invade the Assyrian empire, enter their city and liberate oppressed Israel, he is *anointed* of the Lord for that purpose, although he knows neither the decree determining it, nor the arm which crowns his enterprise with success. “ The whole creation from the seraph down to the invisible atom, ministers to the supreme will, and is under the special observation, government, and direction of the omnipotent mind ; who sees all, himself unseen ; who upholds all, himself unsustained ; who guides all, himself guided by none ; and who changes all, himself unchanged. His sovereign will is the first link ; his unalterable decree the second ; and his all-active providence the third in the great chain of causes : what his will determined, that his decree established, and his providence either mediately, or immediately effects : his will was the adorable spring of all ; his decree marked out the channel, and his providence directs the stream.” *For of him* as the original cause, *and through him* as the constant, omnipo-

tent upholder, *and to him as the ultimate end are all things ; to whom be glory for ever.*

THIS constant, unfelt, yet uncontrouled agency of Jehovah, in the disposal of his creatures, is *a mystery*. Who can comprehend the manner in which he acts in all, and through all, and over all ; and yet all act with a freedom the most perfect and unlimited ; all act as voluntarily in all respects as if there was neither decree determining, nor agency supporting, nor power overruling their actions. *The counsel of the Lord that must stand, he will do all his pleasure,* and yet every rational agent acts according to its pleasure : *HE does according to his will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth ;* and yet the armies both in heaven and earth are performing their will, and accountable for their conduct. This part of the divine *wisdom* however mysterious must be unreservedly taught.—To deny the decrees of the Eternal, and his sovereignty in “governing all his creatures, and all their actions,” is practically to invert the order of the universe ; it is to render the Creator dependent on the will of his creature, and not the creature on the Creator : “To imagine,” as a learned author remarks, “to imagine that a being of boundless wisdom, power and goodness would create the world, and not sit at the helm afterwards, but turn us adrift to shift for ourselves, like an huge vessel without a pilot, is a

supposition which subverts every notion of the Deity, gives the lie to every page of the bible, contradicts our daily experience, and insults the common reason of mankind."

EVERY reader is at liberty to determine for himself; but for my own part, I cannot believe the bible, and doubt the sovereignty of God in fore-ordaining all things from eternity, and over-ruling and governing all things in time: I do not more plainly read that *all scripture is given by inspiration of God*, than I read that *he worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*; that the *counsel of the Lord standeth forever and the thoughts of his heart to all generations*; that *although the lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord*. Among the various passages which prove the sovereign, absolute agency of God in disposing of all things, and that this agency operates in conformity to an eternal, independent purpose, let the following suffice; *For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel are gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel had determined before to be done*; this purpose although formed from eternity is executed in all its circumstances, and at the precise time as really as if the persons had been impelled by some natural and irresistible necessity, *to do whatsoever*; and yet their liberty of action is not in

the least affected ; *they were gathered together* ; they conspired by mutual consent and agreement : Judas acted as freely in betraying his Lord, as any traitor in selling his country or captain ; Pilate acted as freely in condemning him, as any man who sacrifices his conscience to gratify a party ; the people of Israel were as free in *crucifying this Lord of glory*, as any mob in murdering a man against whom they have conceived an implacable enmity : in this as in innumerable other instances the unconditional, eternal appointment of God perfectly harmonises with the freedom of the moral agent ; his purpose is minutely and fully executed, and the *cup of their iniquity filled up*.

3. THE universal corruption of human nature, our entire disposition to evil, and powerful opposition to all that is morally good is another part of this wisdom. The doctrine of human depravity, however melancholy, is evident both from scripture and observation. All who read their bibles are taught, and all who consult their own inclinations must feel that *the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; that the imaginations of the thoughts of the heart are only evil continually*. This part of the wisdom of God is also *a mystery*. The very mode by which transgression entered the world is unaccountable to us. We cannot conceive how Adam who had perfect knowledge in his understanding, and

integrity in his heart could yield to the temptation : how a rational being who was acquainted with the perfections of God and completely happy in his enjoyment would believe the suggestions of a serpent in opposition to the direct, positive command of his creator and Lord. That sin should be admitted into the moral world is altogether mysterious to us ; Jehovah could as easily have established all the angels in their *first estate* as a part of them ; he could as easily have fortified Adam against the insinuations of Satan as restore him after he had fallen. We know also that sin is dishonoring to God, offensive to his holiness, provoking to his justice, and exposes to misery those creatures which he formed holy and happy. But although the manner by which transgression obtained admission be mysterious, yet the fact itself is true, and should be freely *spoken*. To offer salvation through the Son of God without endeavoring to convince men of sin, would be like presenting medicine to one who imagined himself in perfect health, or reaching forth an alms to the man who conceived himself *to be rich and increased with goods*. The disease must be shewn before the healing balm need be offered, or will be accepted ; men must be convinced that they are spiritually *poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked*, before they will come to the market of free grace or embrace the unsearchable riches of Jesus the Mediator.

4. THE manifestation of the Eternal Son, in human nature, and his suffering as *a propitiation for our sin* may be pronounced an important part of *this wisdom*. *We believe and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.* The union of our nature to the divine in the person of Immanuel ; his substitution in our room ; his suffering for *our offences*, and rising again for *our justification* form a chief part of this counsel of God. The apostle *preached first of all*, and last of all, considered it as *the alpha and omega* of all his administrations that *Christ died for our sins, and was buried, and rose again the third day*. This doctrine is also mysterious ; *What is his name, or what is his son's name, if thou canst tell ?* Prophets and apostles, inspired men and unfinning angels, in contemplating the incarnation of the Son of God, pronounce it THE GLORY THAT EXCELLETH ; “ that he who was Eternal should be made in time, the infinite should become finite, the immortal should become mortal, and yet continue eternal, immortal and infinite, is an expression of wisdom and goodness, in which God will be adored and glorified through eternity.” The evangelic Isaiah, foretelling his appearance in the flesh, announces his name to be WONDERFUL, containing natures so immensely distinct and different that language can neither express, nor imagination conceive it. An apostle inspired with a more abundant measure of the illuminating spirit, exclaims,

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness ; God was manifest in the flesh. But this part of the divine wisdom, however mysterious, must be openly proclaimed. The advent of the Messiah into our world, and our redemption through his cross is so interwoven with every page of revelation that to overlook this would be virtually to shun declaring *the whole counsel of God.* All the divine decrees from eternity, the sacrifices which bled on ten thousand altars from the *foundation of the world*, all the prophecies of the old testament and promises of the new, pointed either immediately or remotely to *the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.* Immanuel, God man, the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, the redemption, the advocate of his people is verily the alpha and omega of scripture ; he is not only the cornerstone on which the church is founded, but the top-stone which binds together each part of this immortal building. Woe to that preacher who does not make this wisdom of God in a mystery, Jesus in his atonement and intercession, the *beginning and ending* of every discourse ; Woe to that hearer who does not rejoice in him *as all his salvation and all his desire.* *Better for both of them they had never been born.*

5. OUR sanctification by the power of divine grace and our progress to perfection amidst ten thousand discouragements is another part of *this*

wisdom. The spirit Jehovah is uniformly set forth as the great agent renewing the election of grace, and preparing them for the service of God, and the enjoyment of glory. *They are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. We are changed into the same image with Christ the first born, from glory to glory as by the Lord the spirit.* As he finished the natural world at the creation of all things, moved upon the waters, rendered them productive, causing them to abound with innumerable varieties of fish, he, as an almighty agent, finishes the spiritual creation, he breathes upon the soul which has lain in darkness and death, and raises it to spiritual and immortal life; he infuses new light into the understanding, new love into the heart, new desires into the affections; in short, he renews *the whole spirit, and soul, and body*, and sanctifies them as a living temple for himself. *They are his workmanship*, each member of the inner man is as really formed by his omnipotent operations as the members of the outer man, *created in Christ Jesus unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* This part of the divine wisdom is also a mystery. We cannot comprehend the mode of our natural generation; we cannot conceive how *the bones grow in the womb of her that is with child*, much less can we comprehend the mode of our spiritual generation; how the divine spirit breathes gently, yet irri-

fitly upon the soul; constraining it to Jesus *with the cords of love*, yet commanding it with the energy and majesty of a God. *He who commands the light to shine out of darkness, shines upon the heart, giving the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* There is no violence done to the subjects of his operations, no restraint either upon the understanding, or the heart, yet there is no possibility of resisting. He speaks and the change is mightily effected; the man acts as freely now in closing with Jesus for salvation, and running the way of his commandments, as formerly in going the high road of disobedience and destruction. That saviour who was once *without comeliness or form* now appears *altogether lovely*; the generation of the upright who were formerly the object of his scorn and derision, he now regards as *the excellent of the earth*; that bible which in times past appeared barren and uninteresting is now the subject of his daily and delightful meditations; and those ordinances which were once insupportably tedious, are now the joy and rejoicing of his heart. All this change is wrought upon the sinner by an agent which he cannot see, in a manner which he cannot understand, and by the instrumentality of that word which thousands read and hear without any saving effect. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of*

the spirit. But this doctrine however mysterious must be taught. As we ought to vindicate the glory of Jesus by avowing the necessity and all-sufficiency of his righteousness for reconciliation, we ought to vindicate the glory of the spirit by avowing the necessity and the efficacy of his grace for our sanctification. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves by the washing of regeneration, even the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* There is an intimate co-operation of all the divine persons in effecting the recovery of man. The Father devises the plan, the Son lays down the price, and the Spirit, in equal sovereignty and grace, engages to consummate this salvation, by giving to all the chosen an interest in Jesus and his covenant mercies. Now, to confound the offices of these ever-blessed agents is like throwing up a building without arranging the materials which must leave it a confused, unsightly pile; to exhibit the office of either divine person, and omit the others is like attempting to erect an arch without carrying on the various parts, which necessarily defaces the beauty, and destroys the strength of the whole. God the spirit ought therefore to be preached in his sanctifying, saving operations; he should be held forth to view as an independent, infinite being, working in his people *both to will and to do of his good pleasure.* One apostle therefore represents believers *as elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Fa-*

ther, through sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Another apostle prays in behalf of his hearers that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.*

WITH our sanctification by the power of divine grace, may also be connected the christian's progress to perfection as another part of *this wisdom. The righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger. That grace of Jehovah which was exercised in*

NOTE.

* *The original word which we translate acknowledgment, literally signifies a thorough, perfect, heartfelt knowledge or acquaintance. Such is the translation which is given to the same word in Rom. i. 28. iii. 20. x. 2. 1 Tim ii. 4. Eph. i. 17. and the same translation would, I humbly believe, more fully express the apostles meaning in the present instance. Why does he thus ardently pray that these Colossians might obtain a profound acquaintance with this unsearchable mystery? Probably he intended convincing them that as there is no salvation without an interest in the love of these adorable persons, so a suitable knowledge of the mode of their subsistence, of their offices in our redemption, would much conduce to their spiritual establishment and consolation.*

their election from eternity, and in calling them effectually in time, secures them infallibly to future glory: His love, of which they are partakers, is unchangeable; the covenant in which they are interested is inviolable, and their union to Jesus the Mediator is indissoluble and everlasting. *I have betrothed thee unto me forever; I give to them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither is any man able to pluck them out of my hand.* This part of the divine wisdom is also mysterious.—The manner in which the soul, once brought into the covenant, is kept infallibly in the covenant, is cleansed from ten thousand pollutions, is supported amidst ten thousand discouragements, and is enabled finally to rise triumphant over ten thousand oppositions, is altogether unaccountable. To see a single spark of fire living in the ocean would be mysterious; to see a single soldier maintaining a warfare with a host of adversaries, each incomparably more artful and powerful than himself, is mysterious; to see a small, insignificant insect attempting to thresh the mountains, and marching victorious over them, would be mysterious; but the believer's progress to his Father's kingdom is inconceivably more mysterious. He is weak in himself, he is opposed by innumerable enemies both within and without; *He wrestles not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, with the rulers of the darkness of this world; with spiritual wickedness in high places; and notwithstanding this fiery conflict,*

he rises *more than a conqueror*. This part of the divine wisdom, however mysterious, ought freely to be avowed. It is intimately connected with the peace and joy of the spiritual pilgrim; with the glory of the grace and faithfulness and power of a promising God. The apostle thus addresses the believing Philippians, *Being confident of this very thing that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

THIS passage suggests practical instruction, equally interesting to those who minister, and to those who receive the word of salvation.

1. IT may be inferred, that in divine revelation there are many doctrines mysterious in their nature. Jehovah is a being infinitely above us; *his way is in the sea, his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known*; it is therefore reasonably to be expected, that when HE communicates his will to man there must be some things hard to be understood; truths which our finite capacities are unable to comprehend in their full extent and connection. *Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea. For what man knoweth the*

things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him ? The child does not always see the propriety of the conduct of its parents ; all the arrangements of the sovereign may not be satisfactorily obvious to the subject : *Even so the things of God knoweth none but the Spirit of God.* Must vain mortals presumptuously expect to trace all the movements of HIM who is WONDERFUL IN COUNSEL ; WHO MAKETH DARKNESS HIS PAVILION, and scarcely discovers the skirts of his glory ? It is especially to be expected that in the redemption of man which is the most important, the most sublime of his operations, there will be particular transactions utterly above our conceptions. If man was to be restored, he must be restored in a manner worthy of God ; in a manner which would reflect glory on all his perfections, and shew to every spectator, *whether visible or invisible*, the purity of his law, and the righteousness of his government. It is even presumption in mortals to expect comprehending fully a scheme so immense and elevated, which is designed to appear *the chief of the ways of God*, and beyond all his other works to display the exceeding riches of his wisdom, and sovereignty and love.— There are therefore various doctrines which the *holy men* who uttered them have represented as unsearchable by us : The Trinity of Persons in the Divine Essence, the manifestation of the Son in *the likeness of man*, the union of two natures infinitely different into one, individual Per-

son, faith that living principle by which the sinner is joined to the Saviour, and the resurrection of the body at last are all, in their turn, pronounced A MYSTERY. Such is the acknowledgment of prophets and apostles ; and therefore if every part of divine revelation appeared perfectly plain, obvious to the understanding at first view, the bible would be inconsistent with itself ; it could no longer be considered *a faithful saying* ; it might with propriety be rejected as not coming from him *whose ways are higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts.*

2. It may be infered, that these doctrines, however mysterious, should be taught without reserve by the spiritual steward. *We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery.* It is readily acknowledged that there are particular truths which ought to be discussed with much prudence and caution, lest they be abused by the wanton, or prove stumbling to the weak. The eternal generation of the Son by the Father ; the procession of the Spirit from the Father and the Son should ever be mentioned with the profoundest reverence as a mystery utterly incomprehensible ; otherwise an impure imagination may be led to conceive of God after the manner of men, or consider the SON and SPIRIT as inferior to the Father. The absolute, eternal election of a certain number to future glory is also a doctrine in the illustration of which much wisdom is re-

quisite, lest enquiring souls be discouraged, and the ungodly hardened in sin. While it is taught as the truth of God that *some were ordained to eternal life*, it should also be taught that this decree is among *those secret things which belong to Jehovah*, into which we ought not boldly to enquire; that, in the everlasting gospel, salvation is tendered *freely* to every hearer; that no man knows but he is elected, and that he is really invited and commanded by embracing the offered Saviour *to make his calling and election sure*.—Again, the sovereign agency of the spirit in the sanctification of believers, and their certain perseverance in holiness, are parts of our message to be discussed with extreme caution, lest the presumptuous be tempted to *sin because grace abounds*, or to neglect the means of salvation, merely because they cannot give efficacy to these means. In order to prevent these dangerous consequences, it may be proper to teach that although the Holy Ghost works, yet he usually works by the ordinances of his own appointments; that although *faith is peculiarly his gift*, yet this *faith cometh by hearing the word of God*; that the dead in sin are raised to spiritual life, and those who are already alive to God grow up to *perfect men*, by means of meditation and prayer, by the instrumentality of the word read and preached, as really as the natural babe is supported and nourished by the natural milk. But although caution is requisite in *handling the word*

of life, yet no part of the mystery of God ought to be neglected ; to conceal any truth from an apprehension that the cause might be injured by declaring it, betrays a shameful disbelief both of the power and promise of God ; *to shun* proclaiming any doctrine in its proper season and connection, lest our characters might be exposed to reproach, betrays a damnable pride. Suppose that an ambassador was sent to a foreign court, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty ; and he, from motives of policy or popularity, should conceal a part of his instructions, how arrogant must his conduct appear ? What a reflection upon the court which he was appointed to represent ; as if they knew not what measures were most conducive to their interest and honor ? If liberties of this nature would be thought daring among men, how inconceivably greater is his arrogance who trifles with the authority of the KING of kings ; who ventures to conceal or amend his adorable counsels ? With what sovereignty does the Lord God give command to his servant the prophet, and through him to the spiritual ambassador in every age ? *So thou, O Son of man, I have set thee a watchman to the house of Israel ; therefore thou shalt hear the word from my mouth, and warn them from me. Go unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, thus saith the Lord God, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.* Armed with a commission thus solemn and explicit, how bold were

both prophets and apostles, in proclaiming *the whole counsel of God* without respect to persons, or regard to consequences? For this they cheerfully became the *song of the drunkard*, were derided as *fools* by the wise of this world, and rejected as the very *off-scouring of all things*: Yet neither this scorn, nor persecution *moved* them; yea, they *accounted not even life dear* that they might finish their course with joy; and the ministry which they had received of the Lord Jesus to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

3. IT may be infered, that it is the duty of all implicitly and cordially to receive *this wisdom of God in a mystery*. In vain is the most nourishing bread presented, unless it be improved; in vain do the purest waters flow around us, unless they are applied for quenching our thirst; and in vain are these mysteries of revelation indiscriminately announced, unless indiscriminately embraced.—*All scripture is given by inspiration of God*, and should therefore be fully believed, and thankfully improved by us. As the ministers of Jesus are not at liberty to choose which part of their message to deliver, and which to conceal; neither are his professed followers at liberty to choose which to accept, or which to reject. The consideration that many doctrines of christianity are beyond our comprehension, is not the least objection against receiving them. There are ten thousand appearances in nature which all believe,

yet none can understand. We believe that the heavenly bodies revolve around each other, and that by this revolution, day and night, summer and winter alternately return ; yet no philosopher has attempted fully to explain the laws by which they are kept in motion : We believe that the grass grows without being capable of saying *how* ; we believe that one plant is both pleasant to the palate and nourishing to the body, while another is both offensive and poisonous, yet we are unable to account for this difference of qualities ; they both grow in the same climate, are supported by the same soil, are surrounded with the same atmosphere, have the influences of the same sun to warm, and the same rain to water, and refresh them. I am bold to affirm that those who believe nothing but what they comprehend, must believe nothing at all. There is not a rose that blushes in the garden, not a spire of grass which blooms in the field, not a leaf which waves in the forest that we can completely analyze and understand ; nay they must doubt and deny their very existence. I can as easily explain any mystery in the gospel, as I can explain the manner of my own existence. I am lost when I begin scrupulously to enquire “ how I was created at first, how I am supported from day to day, how the muscles move, how the blood flows in my veins without any agency of mine ; how the food which I take rears me up to the stature of five or six feet, and not the height of fifteen or twenty ;

how, in my constitution, a material body is intimately connected with an immaterial, immortal spirit ; how these partners sensibly act and re-act upon each other ; how a gloomy, disconsolate mind unnerves the vigor of my body, and a disordered body clouds the perceptions and chills the ardor of my mind." Shall we believe these mysteries in nature, and reject all mystery in grace ? Is it replied, " that we see these things with our bodily eyes : we see the sun moving and the grass growing, and therefore cannot disbelieve." I reply that we credit ten thousand facts merely from the report of others, and facts which would be incredible was not the evidence undeniable. We believe that Alexander the great with a single army overran and subdued the world, although no such conquests are related in modern history ; we believe that eruptions frequently take place in Etna and Vesavius, although there is no such appearance in any mountain around us. Shall we credit these and innumerable other facts upon the foundation of human testimony, and why not believe upon the foundation of divine ? Shall we reject a report merely because Jehovah is its author ? It becomes us rather to imitate the reasoning of the evangelist, *if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater ; he is not a man that he should lie ; he cannot possibly be deceived, neither will he deceive others.* When a doctrine is contained in the scriptures, the question is not,

“does it appear reasonable; does my understanding fully comprehend it;” but, “is it a revelation from God?” *A thus faith the Lord* is the highest possible evidence that mortals can either ask or expect. We are no less bound to believe what he reveals, however unsearchable, than to perform what he commands, however arduous. Never does man act a part nobler in itself, more becoming his station than when he lays his reason at the foot of the gospel, and receives implicitly whatever it contains; believes without reserve *this wisdom of God in a mystery.*

“*My favored soul shall meekly learn
“To lay her reason at his throne,
“And weak his secrets to discern,
“Shall trust him for her guide alone.”*

I WOULD conclude animating all to a most devout, diligent study of these *mysteries of godliness*. What nobler, what more interesting subject can possibly occupy the attention of mortals? “They have God for their author.” *Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*; They contain truths infinitely sublime, and important for their matter and “salvation for their end.” *These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.* Is the student eager in the pursuit of learning which virtually perishes in the using. Does the philosopher

exhaust his time and strength in exploring the varied mysteries of nature merely to gratify his curiosity, or immortalize his name? And shall we be less ardent, less unwearied in a study in which the honor of God, our present peace, and our everlasting salvation are most intimately concerned? *Search the scriptures therefore, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of Jesus.* In proportion as ye are occupied in contemplating these mysteries of redemption, you become fellow students with ancient patriarchs *who rejoiced to see the day of Christ afar off*; who looked forward with equal transports of wonder and joy to the place and the period of his manifestation in the flesh; with prophets *who searched diligently respecting the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*; with evangelists and apostles, who counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord; with angels and archangels, with the seraphim and the cherubim, who eagerly look into these wonders of redeeming love, and learn, through them, *the manifold wisdom of God.* I would again invite all to the devout, diligent contemplation of these *mysteries of Godliness.* Is it the most dignified, it is also the most profitable study in which you can possibly engage. The mind is led to realise the vanity of the world, and its perishing prospects; it obtains peace amidst all the tumults of this fluctuating scene, *a peace which passeth all understanding*;

it is elevated more and more to God as its consolation and glory ; it is gradually ripening for those regions of immortality where JESUS CRUCIFIED AND GLORIFIED, IS ALL AND IN ALL. There new wonders in eternal succession will be bursting forth upon their admiring eyes ; and other joys, and other joys everlastingly rolling in upon their enraptured hearts.

With open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, may you all be changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. AMEN.

Sermon II.

The Universal Apostacy of Mankind confirmed.



ROMANS iii. 23.

FOR ALL HAVE SINNED.

HE who accidentally witnesses two neighbors contending with each other, immediately enquires into the cause; he naturally feels an anxiety to ascertain the source of their contention, and either justifies or condemns agreeably to the information obtained: If two nations are involved in war, and each aims at the destruction of the other, every spectator enquires into the original cause; that particular interest which he feels in the welfare of either or both impels him to examine, what circumstances first excited their jealousies, and afterwards issued in consequences thus awful. There is evidently a controversy between the LORD GOD OF HOSTS and our world: Whence that disquietude which often agitates the human mind; those diseases which torture the body; those scourges which perplex the nations? They all undeniably evince that the Creator has a controversy with his creature: These appearances of divine displeasure are not peculiar to one period of time, or one part of the world; they are common to all nations, and to

each individual of every nation. All are therefore interested in the enquiry, what is the probable cause of this indignation of the Almighty ? What melancholy event has forfeited his favor, and exposed us to these repeated and awful expressions of his wrath ? No jar, or even jealousy existed at the first creation of man : No tempest then ruffled the ocean of human life ; no blackness gathered over our heavens ; no lightning blazed or thunders rolled either to disturb or destroy. *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good ; and he rested and was refreshed.* The Creator experienced ineffable delight in the contemplation of his works, and ministering to every species of being a happiness suited to its capacity ; in man especially, he beheld his own image illustriously shining, *knowledge and righteousness and holiness* ; he saw his various powers of body and mind perfectly harmonising in their maker's praise : man, on the other hand, beheld in Jehovah a friend and father ; felt the most refined, elevated joy in his communion, and contemplated all his perfections co operating for his welfare. But this communion is suddenly suspended ; the former smiles of the eternal are now succeeded by fearful evidences of his wrath, and the mournful reason is assigned in our text, *For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*

SIN is defined in our shorter catechism to con-

fit in “any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God.” Such also is the definition given by an inspired evangelist, *Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth the law, for sin is a transgression of the law.* The original word translated *sin* literally signifies a departure from some rule that is prescribed; a deviation from a particular line that is drawn or from any mark at which we are aiming. Sin may therefore be considered as a violation of the divine law, either by omission or commission; a departure from this eternal standard of righteousness either by neglecting to perform what it requires or committing what it actually forbids.

It is our present design, with a humble reliance on divine aid, to establish the doctrine of universal apostacy from the living God; to prove as the apostle asserts, that *all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.*

And while we attempt, in the language of the Holy Ghost, to confirm this truth, may our consciences, under his powerful influences, be deeply convinced of sin; may we all be enabled to realise its dangerous and ruining consequences.

THE truth of the proposition that *all have sinned*, is obvious.

1. From the explicit and repeated declarations

of scripture ; it is written as with sun-beams in almost every page of revelation, and in almost every line of every page. To repeat all the passages which tend to establish this fundamental, yet humiliating article of our religion would be to repeat a great part of this heavenly record. One inspired writer testifies, *and God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.* It demands our consideration that it was not the wickedness of one man which Jehovah is represented as beholding, nor the impiety of a particular kindred or nation, but *of mankind, of human nature* ; the whole mass was corrupted, every individual of every nation was smitten with the deadly contagion ; the whole head was sick, and the whole heart was faint ; *and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* Language cannot possibly be more explicit to express the corruption of mankind in general, the exceeding, desperate depravity of each individual, *every imagination of the thought of his heart was evil, only evil* to the utter exclusion of all that is morally or spiritually good ; *evil continually* ; through the powerful influence, the unlimited reign of impiety there was not the interval of a moment for serious reflection or spiritual exercises. Again, *God looked upon the earth and behold it was corrupt ; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.* The Lord is represented by another infallible witness, as *looking down from heaven upon the children of men*

to see if there were any that did understand and seek God : to ascertain if there was an individual among the numerous offspring of Adam who retained his integrity and sought after God his creator ; and what was the result of this enquiry ? It was equally mournful and humiliating. They are all gone aside, is the divine testimony, they are altogether become filthy ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. But this general apostacy was not peculiar to the age of the patriarchs or the prophets ; the same charge is renewed hundreds of years afterwards, although men had enjoyed all the advantages of civilized life and a written revelation from God. An inspired apostle declares, *We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin.* This passage is peculiarly forcible for establishing the doctrine of universal corruption, and is entitled to some examination. The Jews were the posterity of Abraham ; a people in covenant with Jehovah and the peculiar favorites of heaven ; exalted above all others by *the adoption, and the glory, and the service of God and the promises ;* the Gentiles were the rest of the nations ; all not immediately included within the pale of the Jewish church : the apostle boldly maintains that no nation was exempted from the general charge ; that whether they were Jews, a people who had been favored with such frequent and clear manifestations of the divine will, who had received a system of worship prescribed by God himself ; or whether they

were Gentiles, given up to the dictates of their own blinded understandings and involved in the absurdities of a gross idolatry, *they were all under sin, and guilty before God.* He afterwards brings home the indictment to the conscience of every individual in the words of an Old Testament prophet, *There is none righteous, no, not one ; they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one ; their throat is an open sepulchre ; with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips, and the way of peace they have not known ; there is no fear of God before their eyes ; now we know that whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law ; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.* Was it thought necessary, innumerable other passages of scripture might be adduced for the confirmation of this doctrine. One asserts, *there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not ; Lo, this only have I found that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions ;* Another acknowledges, *If thou Lord shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand ; in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

2. THE doctrine that *all have sinned* is evident from the experience of all. No one who impartially examines his own heart will dare to assert, *I am clean without transgression, I am innocent ;*

neither is there iniquity with me. Have we upon all occasions followed the dictates of our own consciences ; performing whatever the light of nature proclaimed to be right ? Have we conducted towards others amidst all circumstances as we thought they should have conducted towards us amidst the same circumstances ? Have we performed our duty upon all occasions to our great creator, giving him that share of our affections, and our services to which he is most reasonably entitled ? Have we really loved *him with all our heart, our soul, our mind and strength, as he has required* in the first commandment ? Have we cordially received and observed such religious worship and ordinances, as God hath appointed in his word agreeably to the second commandment ? Have we entertained a becoming reverence of the name of Jehovah, of his being and perfections, sanctifying him in our hearts, making him our fear and our dread as he has required in the third commandment ? Have we never thought of him, or spoken of him without that solemnity of spirit which is due to a being infinitely great ? Have we sanctified his holy sabbath as he has solemnly required in his fourth commandment, ceasing from the ordinary employments of life, stirring up our souls to a becoming contemplation of the Most High ; admiring his perfections as displayed both in creation and redemption ? Have we not fallen infinitely short of those duties which we owe to each other

in the various relations of life ; our obligations as parents to children, and children to parents ; as masters to servants, and servants to masters ; as magistrates to citizens, and citizens to magistrates ? Have we never indulged malignant tho'ts against our neighbor contrary to the sixth commandment ? Have we not been shamefully unchaste in our thoughts, and words, and actions, contrary to what God requires in the seventh commandment ? Have we not upon some occasions injured the property of our neighbor either by taking the advantage of his ignorance or necessity, in opposition to the eighth commandment ? Have we not been guilty of slander, of coveting the property and envying the prosperity of others, contrary to the duties required in the ninth and tenth commandments ? Thus he who impartially examines his own heart, its secret motives and operations, must be conscious to himself of ten thousand imperfections ; he who compares his own life with the law of God, that unerring, eternal standard of righteousness must be constrained to the humiliating confession, that *in many things we have all offended ; we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God.*

3. THIS doctrine is equally plain from observation on the conduct of others. Behold man in every period of life, from infancy to old age ; view him in all the diversified relations of life, whe-

ther as a superior or inferior ; contemplate him in every situation, whether prosperous or adverse, and you discern plain, undeniable proofs of imperfection ; you may behold the corruption of all in their conduct and conversation. Do not the sighs and tears of the new born babe express, in such language as it is capable of using, its discontentment with its situation, and consequently the secret enmity of its heart against the author of its existence ? Do not children, gradually as they ripen to capacity for action, discover strong, incorrigible propensities to evil ? Are they not incomparably more inclined to imitate the example of the vicious than the virtuous around them ? With what ease can they retain an idle, trifling little tale, any wanton, impure conversation which they hear ; but in whatever relates to God, to their souls and future concerns, *line upon line ; line upon line ; precept upon precept ; precept upon precept* are found insufficient. The aged, again, are usually peevish, fretful, discontented ; they are ready to ask, *Wherefore hath God made all men in vain ? They loath life*, and become in some measure dissatisfied with themselves and all around them. Contemplate the conduct of man in the different grades and circumstances of life. Are not the poor usually envious ; do they not behold with a malignant eye the prosperity of others ; are they not disposed to challenge the wisdom and justice and goodness of God in the distribution of outward blessings ? Are not the

rich, on the other hand, proud, imperious, oppressive; glorying in their wealth as if their superior wisdom or excellence had acquired it? Is not civil authority, by those who are called to exercise it, frequently converted into an instrument of oppression; is it not rather employed for promoting the misery than the happiness of others; while those who ought to be subject are, in their turn, turbulent, envious, neither shewing a proper respect to the person nor authority of the civil magistrate. Is not man evidently at war with man, although they are connected to each other by relations the most intimate and endearing? Have not all the laws which human wisdom could devise, or human power execute, proved insufficient to restrain them from devouring the persons and property of each other?—What contentions often disturb the peace, and almost destroy the existence of families and settlements and nations? They must therefore be more than blind who cannot discern, and more than obstinate who will not acknowledge from observation the universal corruption of human nature; that the accursed *leaven* of sin has pervaded and contaminated the whole mass. The heathen,* entirely destitute of any supernatural

NOTE.

* *To omit mentioning numerous proofs which might be adduced from historians and moralists among the heathen, I shall offer the following from a celebrated*

revelation, were convinced of the mournful truth and were constrained to confess and deplore it. Their poets and philosophers were almost as explicit on this subject as we can be with the bible before our eyes.

4. THIS truth is undeniably established if we advert to those miseries to which all are indiscriminately exposed. It may be laid down as an unquestionable maxim, that as God cannot consistently pardon the guilty, neither can he, neither will he punish the innocent ; that suffering upon a rational being can only be inflicted as a consequence of sin ; that when the subjects of a prince who is perfection itself, who can have no pleasure in their death, but is rather delighted in promoting their happiness, when the subjects of such a prince are invariably under his frown, experiencing his displeasure in one respect or another, there must be some fault in themselves ; it must arise either from want of esteem to his person or obedience to his laws. If this principle

poet. Nam vitiiis nemo sine nascitur ; optimus ille est qui minimis urgetur. " For no man is born without faults ; he is most perfect who has the fewest." Hor. Sat. b. 1, Sat. iii. v. 68, 9. Such a testimony from the lips of a heathen has, certainly, some weight towards the confirmation of this truth ; especially when it is uttered by one the licentiousness of whose principles and practices forbade him to be very severe in criticising the conduct of others.

be acknowledged, and all who entertain becoming conceptions either of the mercy or justice of Jehovah will readily acknowledge it, then the conclusion is obvious that *all must have sinned*. Is not misery co-extensive with man in all periods and circumstances of life ! Not to mention those more public and awful scourges of the Almighty by which nations perish in an hour ; not to mention the earthquake by which the lofty city is levelled with the ground, or the pestilence which *walketh in darkness*, wasting its ten thousands, or war which deluges a land in the blood of its inhabitants, does not misery in one form or another haunt the children of Adam all the days of their pilgrimage upon earth ? *Man that is born of a woman is a few days and full of trouble*. As the period of human life is short, this short period is a succession of sorrows and contrition. *He cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down*. “ He is born crying, lives complaining, and dies disappointed of his hope.” Does not misery assail the infant the very moment of its entrance on the theatre of life ? And if any attain to *threescore years or four, yet is their strength, labour and sorrow*. Wherever we cast our eyes around us are not spectacles of wretchedness presented to our view ? One pines in poverty, wanting even the necessaries of life ; another is tortured with exquisite pain ; in the morning he longs for the return of evening, and in the evening longs for the approach of the morning, that another period

of his torment may be past? Do we not taste some bitter ingredient intermingled with every cup of earthly enjoyment, as a plain proof that the curse denounced against the first transgression of Adam is now experienced by all his natural offspring? *Cursed be the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life.* What is the glare of the wealthy, or the majesty of the great but more splendid misery? Disquiet and anxiety wrangle the bosom of the prince upon his throne, no less than of the beggar upon the dunghill; disease tortures alike the body covered with purple and with rags; and death, with equal sternness, demands admission into the palace of the mighty and the cottage of the mean. *Although, as the plaintive patriarch expresses it, although afflictions cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward.* Vexation and disappointment meet us in every stage, and occupation, and enjoyment of life. On what principle, then, can we account for this universal reign of misery and death, unless from the universal reign of transgression? *Who ever perished being innocent? Or where were the righteous cut off?* Will a tender parent deliberately scourge the child which uniformly obeys his commands? Will a righteous judge doom to punishment or death the citizen who has never broken the laws of his country? Or can it be consistent with the benevolence or justice of the eter-

nal to pursue with constant marks of his indignation a being who always fulfilled his pleasure and answered the end of his creation? There is no misery among the angels of light, those blessed spirits *that kept their first estate* and obey the will of their creator ; being perfectly holy they are perfectly happy : there will be no complaint either outward or inward among all the redeemed of the Lamb through eternity ; being once freed from sin, they will be freed from suffering, its constant attendant ; *they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more ; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.* Their bodies which are now frail through corruption shall flourish in immortal youth. We therefore infer the apostacy of all men from that vanity, those miseries to which they are now subjected ; we may reasonably conclude that all must have sinned, because they actually suffer ; *that destruction and misery are in their paths, because there is no fear of God before their eyes.* Such is the reasoning of the great apostle on this subject. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin ; so that death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned ;* he teaches as plainly as language can express that “ sin brought death into the world and all our woe ;” that all the afflictions which accompany man from his cradle to the grave, come only as the reward of transgression ; he proves also from this universal reign of death, the corrup-

tion even of infants : that they must be guilty before God, if not actually by any transgression of their own, yet originally in Adam their representing head. *For until the law, sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law ; Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.*

THE proposition, that *all have sinned*, is therefore undeniably established from the plain repeated testimonies of Jehovah in his word ; from the consciousness which every one, who impartially searches his own heart, must have of his imperfections : from an observation of human conduct in every possible circumstance and relation of life ; and also from those miseries to which all are exposed. From this variety of evidence we are obliged to draw the humiliating conclusion, *There is none righteous, no, not one ; they are all gone out of the way ; they are altogether become unprofitable ; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

IN applying this doctrine we are called,

1. To pause and drop a tear over the perished glory of human nature ; into what degradation and misery is it now plunged by transgression ? *How is the gold become dim, how is the most fine gold changed ?* The building once stood

fair and firm ; all its parts proportioned with infinite wisdom, and its height towering toward the heavens ; thus situated it promised to resist every storm and to stand an eternal monument of glory to its author, and admiration to the world. But, ah, how fallen ! by one untimely shock this fair fabric is prostrated in ruins and lies a spectacle of pity, of scorn to God, to angels and the universe. Behold man as he proceeds at first from his creator's hand ; he is formed after *the divine image, in knowledge, righteousness and holiness* ; light beams unclouded upon his understanding ; he possesses all that knowledge of God, of his persons and perfections which was necessary for the discharge of his duty or could conduce to his happiness ; holiness without the least spot of pollution sits enthroned on his heart ; his affections are all pure and spiritual, centering upon Jehovah as his glory and joy ; the very members of his body were all holy, ready to encourage and aid his immortal spirit in the service of his creator ; the tongue, like a well tuned organ, expressing the gratitude and devotion of the heart poured forth the melody of praise ; the eye, upon each survey of the natural world, of the trees which so richly adorned the garden, of the sun which *ruled by day, and the moon and the stars which adorned the evening sky*, lifted up the soul to a fresh admiration of their infinite author. Every outward enjoyment was crowned with the most intimate, uninterrupted communion of his

God. Such was the character, such the condition of Adam as created by Jehovah and placed in the earthly paradise. No wonder that apostate spirits envied his happiness and early employed their infernal ingenuity in attempting to rob him of his God and glory. How changed, how degraded now ? Light in his understanding is succeeded by the blackness of darkness ; holiness in his heart by the most incorrigible enmity and obstinacy ; his affections that were once pure are become earthly, sensual and devilish ; the members of his body are utterly disordered and have become *instruments of unrighteousness to sin ; his throat is an open sepulchre*, emitting the foul abominations of his heart, *his mouth* formerly the organ of praise, *is full of cursing and bitterness ; his feet*, formed to run the way of the divine commandments, *are swift to shed blood ;* “ The eyes which before met the approach of God with rapture, are now clouded with sorrow, tremble with fear, or strain with remorse and horror at the voice of the Almighty ; that tongue which was once tuned only to the accent and language of love has in a moment learned to reproach and upbraid ; where innocence sat enthroned, there fell despair broods over her own stinging reflections and tormenting fears ; above, the throne of an angry God, beneath, a fathomless gulph kindled by the breath of the Almighty, within, a troubled conscience like the raging sea incapable of taking rest ; the glory is departed,

the gold is become dim, the most fine gold changed." Jehovah turns away disgusted, disappointed from the workmanship of his hand; *he repents that he had made man upon the earth, he is grieved at his heart.*

2. ENDEAVOR to be deeply convinced of the alarming truth that all *have sinned and have come short of the glory of God.* Unless the understanding is really, thoroughly convinced of the truth, there is little prospect that it will prove effectual, either for alarming the conscience or humbling the heart; there can be little prospect that it will succeed in producing those fruits of contrition, of humiliation which issue in glory to God or saving advantage to ourselves. We must believe that we have really dishonored God, before we can be cordial in lamenting that dishonor; we must be convinced that we are involved in guilt and pollution before we can be really earnest in desiring the pardon of the one or the purification of the other. Now, brethren, I would solemnly appeal to your own candor, and ask, is there a doctrine in all these oracles of the living God more clearly revealed or more frequently repeated than the doctrine of universal corruption? Is it more plainly taught that *there is one God*, than it is taught that *by the offence of one judgment has passed upon all men to condemnation? That death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned?* Is it more positively ex-

pressed *there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus ; that the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, than it is expressed, that all flesh have corrupted their ways ; that every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually ?* May we not therefore, with equal propriety, deny the existence of God, the unity of the divine essence, the incarnation of the Eternal Son, as deny the universal apostacy and ruin of mankind ? They are revealed in the same volume, taught with the same clearness, and enstamped with the same high authority, *and thus saith the Lord.* It becomes us, therefore, to exclaim in the language of the church, *We appear before thee in our trespasses ; we have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments ; O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee ; to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee ; “ thou, Jehovah, art just in all the judgments which thou hast poured upon our world, in all that vanity which thou art causing us to experience in every enjoyment of life, in all that disease of body, and disquietude of mind to which we are exposed, because we have sinned against thee.”*

3. AIM at realising the certain and awful consequences of transgression. It really exposes to

the curse of almighty God ; it renders us obnoxious to all misery, both here and hereafter. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness.* Art thou persuaded that every transgression binds thee over to the curse, and does thy conscience tremble under the persuasion ? A cold, speculative belief that *all have sinned*, that *the whole world is become guilty before God*, is unprofitable ; each individual ought particularly to apply the doctrine to himself, *I am the man ; I have sinned, what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men. Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and I am therefore by nature a child of wrath even as others.* It is truly affecting that thousands entertain some general notions about their original and actual sin, without giving themselves any more concern ; they will not be at the trouble of reflecting on its consequences ; this consideration, although infinitely awful, rarely produces an uneasy emotion in their hearts, an anxious cry from their lips, or a penitential tear from their eyes ; they can lie down in the evening and rise up in the morning ; they can proceed to their ordinary employments, and retire from these employments when the wrath of God is hanging over them, and the sword of justice is unsheathed for their blood, with ten thousand

times less anxiety than that of a child or servant when threatened by a parent or master. Endeavor, therefore, to be affected with the dangerous and damning consequences of sin. What avails it for a man merely to know he is diseased, he will not determine on consulting or employing a physician until he is alarmed with the probable issue of his disease? What avails it for the criminal to know that he has broken the law of his country, and that his sovereign is offended, he will not think of acknowledging his crime or asking forgiveness until he apprehends the actual punishment of his offence; neither will the sinner be truly earnest about fleeing from *the wrath to come*, unless he be fully convinced that he is exposed to wrath; that he is liable *to the damnation of hell*. How cheerful were the most perfect of the righteous in the confession of their sin; how contrite their spirits under a consciousness of their imperfections; how ardent in imploring the exercise of mercy in their behalf? *If I justify myself mine own mouth would condemn me, if I say I am perfect, I shall prove myself perverse; I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him; I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth; Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.*

I shall now conclude this discourse with a single inference to the ungodly, and to the righteous.

1. To the ungodly, who are yet in their sins, who *have never fled for refuge* to the everlasting surety, nor improved his *great salvation*, heavy tidings must be uttered from the Lord of hosts. *There is no peace saith my God to the wicked*, and therefore none to thee in thy present condition. *The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men*, and is therefore revealed against thee. Art thou, thoughtless sinner, art thou in childhood, remember that thou art called *a transgressor from the womb*, and *a child of wrath* : Behold thou wast *shapen in iniquity and in sin did thy mother conceive* thee. Thy parents may perhaps flatter thee, but the living God is thine adversary whilst thou art unreconciled by the blood of Jesus : Health may bloom in thy cheek, joy may suffuse thy heart, and the world present its gilded charms before thine eyes, but the wrath of almighty God hangs over thy head, and the broken law thunders its curses in thine ears. Art thou, thoughtless sinner, art thou in youth, in manhood or old age, thou also art an heir of wrath not only by *nature* but by *practice* ; as thou wast really born under the sentence of condemnation, so all the transgressions thou hast committed from infancy to the present hour ; all the serious advices thou hast neglected, all the holy impressions thou hast quenched, all the vain, idle thoughts thou hast entertained, all the unholy, unprofitable words thou hast uttered ; these are all charged

against thee in the volumn of Jehovah's remembrance ; and without a speedy application to his mercy, through Jesus Christ, the accumulated sins of thy nature and life will fill up thy cup to its brim, and bring upon thee *wrath to the very uttermost*. Dream not of impunity while sin is indulged in thy heart : Did a holy God for their sins hurl the angels from heaven, drive them down to hell, and bind *them in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day*, and shalt thou escape living and dying in thy transgressions ? Did a holy God, for their sin, punish Sodom and Gomorah, causing them *to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire*, and shalt thou escape living and dying in thy transgressions ? Did a holy God punish sin to the uttermost in his own son ; did he command the sword of justice to awake and cleave him to the dust of death when undertaking as surety for man, and shalt thou escape living and dying in thy transgressions ? *Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ; they that sow to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. The word is gone out of his mouth and shall not return, that he will by no means clear the guilty. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them. The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God.* Fondly I would convince you of your multiplied, spiritual diseases, that you

might be brought to welcome the great PHYSICIAN ; fondly I would open up the malignant, mortal wound of sin to prepare for administering *the healing balm* ; fondly I would alarm you with apprehensions of divine wrath, that you might be driven by a holy necessity to that Jesus in whom there is *plenteous redemption* ; *Who is the end of the law for righteousness to all them that believe.* A door of hope is now opened for you through his obedience and blood ; mercy abounds thro' the merits of his cross for the very chief of sinners. *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is the son of man lifted up ; that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life.* The Lord grant that *as in Adam you all died, in Christ you may all be made alive ;* alive to all the privileges of grace and glory.

THIS doctrine may also be improved for the humiliation and gratitude of the righteous ; of those who *are begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*—*Hail, ye children of the kingdom, hail ye are highly favored of Jehovah.* Reflect on your former condition, *without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world ; fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others ;* Look back occasionally to that rock from whence you were hewn, to that pit of perdition from whence you were delivered ; and let each reflection on

your past character and condition excite you to adore the freedom and sovereignty of divine grace ; let it awaken more ardent emotions of love to that Jesus who *was delivered for your offences, and died that you might live.* Improve more and more the *Lamb of God for taking away your sin* ; his sacrifice for expiating its guilt, his grace for subduing its power and washing away its pollution. Your daily imperfections loudly demand the daily application of his blood for preserving peace in your own consciences and with the living God ; the daily risings and prevalence of corruption require the daily improvement of his covenant fulness, for perfecting your sanctification ; and remember for your consolation, that both your pardon and purification are equally secured by the sufferings of his cross.—*Ye are complete in him who is the head of all principality and power. He gave himself for you to redeem you from all iniquity and to purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works. Rejoice evermore in the all-sufficiency of the redeemer's satisfaction ; contemplate this as a complete and everlasting discharge from condemnation. He hath finished transgression ; made an end of sin, made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.* The moment of your union to his Person you become perfect as to your justification ; complete as the righteousness of a God can render you ; and shortly, through the influences of his spirit, you

shall become equally perfect as to sanctification ; conformed in the highest possible degree to the likeness of your Lord, and introduced to his most intimate fellowship. There you shall eternally admire the mystery, and experience the consolation of the truth, that *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ; That as sin reigned unto death grace also reigned through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.* AMEN.

Sermon III.

*All become Guilty by the Transgression of Adam
as their federal Head.*



ROMANS v. 12.

BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD.

WHEN all the branches of a tree are evidently languishing ; when the leaves wither and the fruit drops off before its season, we naturally conjecture that the trunk itself must be disordered, or that some capital defect must exist in the roots from which it sprung ; when all the streams which issue from a particular fountain become impure ; when the colour of their waters is changed, and their influence is offensive and noxious, we immediately conclude that the source from which they flow must be disordered. When the various parts of an arch or building are decaying ; when they are separating from each other and tottering to fall, we naturally conclude that the foundation is deranged and insecure : Thus when we behold the unnumbered millions of the human family ; men of all ages, of all countries, in every variety of condition plunged alike in pollution, *hateful and hating one another*, we are obliged to suspect that some fatal

accident has happened our common father ; that the head itself must be disordered when the deadly contagion strikes through all the members of the body. The more enlightened among the heathen entertained these conjectures, and the more candid openly expressed them ; from the disorders of mankind in general, from the avarice of one, the intemperance of a second, the unrestrained ambition of a third, the imperfections of all, they concluded that human nature was universally depraved, that it had degenerated from its original purity and glory, but *when* or *how* the fatal change was effected ; at what period the accursed *leaven* pervaded *the whole lump*, or by what peculiar arrangement of Jehovah, the Son apparently inherited the corruptions of his Father, were questions which reason of itself could never have solved ; although they were convinced of the fact, the cause they were unable to explore. To afford this discovery is peculiar to the gospel of the Son of God. With this celestial light, the bible in our hand, we behold not only the stream of human corruption, but the very source from which it flows. *In Adam*, is the declaration of this inspired, unerring oracle, *In Adam all die ; By one man sin entered into the world*. Your attention was lately directed to the universal apostacy and corruption of man. We endeavored to support the general charge, and to prove from the plain, repeated declarations of scripture ; from the conduct of man in

all ages and all circumstances ; from their complicated miseries both temporal and spiritual that all flesh have really corrupted their way, and come short of the divine glory : that sin, this bold usurper, this foe of God and man, has obtained an unlimited reign in our world ; that his dominion is co-extensive with mankind, and reaches particularly to every son and daughter of Adam. *They are all gone aside ; they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doeth good, no not one.*

It is designed at present, with a humble reliance on the same spirit for direction to shew,

1. THE manner of its entrance, by *one man* *sin entered* ; And

2. THE peculiar relation of that *one man* to all other men, as a sufficient reason why his transgression was charged to them.

OUR first enquiry is into the manner by which transgression obtained its entrance, by *one man*.

As it is undeniably evident that sin has entered our world ; that it has reigned to the condemnation and ruin of all, it is equally evident that its entrance was by the failure of *one*. This fundamental article of our religion is no less than seven times repeated in the chapter in which our

text is contained. We are taught in the 12th verse that by *one man sin entered into the world*, and the apostle adds in the conclusion of the same verse, *in* whom all have sinned* : It is as-

NOTE.

* *I have taken the liberty of following the marginal reading in the present instance, and rendering the words which are commonly translated, for that, in whom all have sinned. The Greek preposition epi in various instances, when it governs the dative, is rendered in.—Such is evidently its meaning in Acts v. 40. They commanded that they should not speak, epi onomati, in the name of Jesus. Rom. ix. 33. Whosoever believeth, ep. auto, in him shall not be ashamed. Rom. xv, 12, ep. auto, in him shall the Gentiles trust. 1 Tim. iv, 10. We trust, epi theo zonti, in the living God.—This translation of the preposition, epi, as it occurs in Rom. v, 12, is supported by the most correct and profound commentators ; particularly by Guise, Beza, Stockeus and Theophilact. The latter of these expositors is so explicit and satisfactory that I take pleasure in transcribing his words. “ In whom” he remarks, “ all have sinned ; that is, in Adam all have sinned ; for when he fell, they also who had not eaten of the tree became mortal by or through him : so that they themselves offended, when he offended.” Theop. on Rom. v, 12.*

When the passage is thus translated, it establishes our federal relation to Adam beyond a doubt ; it appears undeniably evident that we are involved not merely in the consequences of his transgression, but in its guilt ; that we, as represented in him, were as really considered sinful as Adam who actually committed the sin.

serted in the 15th verse, that *through the offence of one many be dead* : We learn from the 16th verse that *the judgment was by one to condemnation* : In the 17th it is expressly declared, that *by one man's offence death reigned by one* : We are taught from the 18th verse that *by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation* ; and in the 19th we read that *by one man's disobedience many were made, constituted, sinners*.

WHAT must we infer from the frequent repetition of the same principle ? What is probably the reason that a particular doctrine is presented to our view again and again, in verses immediately succeeding each other ? This circumstance may convince us that our representation and fall in the first Adam is an article not only unquestionably true, but of prime importance to the christian's faith. Surely the Holy Ghost, who cannot be charged with saying or doing any thing in vain, would not repeat the same doctrine so frequently, nor establish it by such a variety of evidence unless it were a truth infinitely interesting ; a truth which ought to be firmly believed and openly avowed by all. He, no doubt, foresaw the fiery opposition which this doctrine should encounter from the carnal reasonings of men, and intended to furnish us with ample, irresistible proof for its confirmation. Probably, also, the apostle, in this instance, was designed as a pattern for those who should succeed him in

the ministerial office, shewing that whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear these distinguishing doctrines of the cross must be openly and frequently taught.

LEST any doubts should be entertained respecting this *one man* by whom the judgment passed upon all men to condemnation the apostle particularly names him in another epistle, in *Adam all die* ; in the fall of this their common parent they virtually fell ; they actually were involved in the curse, and became liable to death as the just and awful consequence ; from him their natural and federal head, the deadly contagion has diffused its influence until his whole posterity is corrupted and destroyed.

HAVING established the doctrine of our fall in the first Adam, we proceed.

Second, To examine the peculiar relation of this man to all other men, as a reason why his transgression was justly charged to their account. Adam evidently sustained the relation of a public representing head : He was not only the natural root from which descend the kindreds of the nations, but their federal head : He was actually constituted their representative in the covenant of works. In consequence of this transaction he and his off-spring were justly considered as *one* in law ; whatever he did, they did : while he ob-

he obeyed, they, being represented in him, also obeyed; when he transgressed, they also transgressed, and together with him became liable to all misery both temporal and eternal. Adam is, therefore, explicitly called *the figure*, or type, or semblance of *him that was to come*, of Christ Jesus the Lord who should afterwards be revealed. For what reason can we imagine that Adam was pronounced a *figure* of Messiah? Surely not because he was a man possessing a human body and soul, for in that sense every other man might be called a *figure* of Christ no less than Adam. He was so denominated on account of some real analogy, some important resemblance between him and the Son of God which did not exist between any other person and the Son of God. The meaning is obviously this, that these persons, in their respective order, sustained a public capacity; that as Adam was constituted head in the covenant of works, Christ was constituted head of the covenant of grace; that as the one represented all his natural off-spring, the other represented all his spiritual off-spring, that as the latter by his vicarious obedience conveyed life and immortality to his seed, the former by his disobedience conveyed condemnation and death to his seed. This important article of our faith is most happily expressed in the Westminster catechism. “The covenant being made with Adam not only for himself, but for his posterity, all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation sinned

in him and fell with him in his first transgression." The authors of this admirable system pronounce all mankind to have sinned in Adam, because as he was ordained their representative in the covenant of works, his act in the estimation of law and justice was their act ; his condemnation was their condemnation ; his exclusion from the favor and fellowship of his God was their exclusion.

I AM fully aware that this doctrine is unpopular ; by those who consider their own reason as a guide more infallible than even divine revelation it is confidently asked, " where is the benevolence or justice of this dispensation ? Where is the propriety of involving the fate of millions in the caprice of an individual, and dooming them to destruction for a single transgression of his ?" Such presumptuous objections and banter might be silenced with the challenge of the great Apostle, *O man, who art thou that repliest against God ? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus ?* But as we are set for the defence of the gospel, and bound, according to our ability, to aim at justifying the ways of God to men I humbly offer the following considerations as a vindication of Jehovah's conduct in that transaction ; and to every impartial enquirer after truth they will represent his procedure as both wise and gracious ; as not only consistent with justice on the part of God, but really conducive to the interests of man.

1. ADAM, when ordained our federal head, was completely qualified for the important trust ; he was fully competent to have executed the condition of the covenant to the glory of his creator, and the everlasting happiness of himself and his posterity. He was created UPRIGHT, holy as it was possible for a creature to be holy and thus both able and inclined to obey the will of his Lord. He was formed after the image of God in KNOWLEDGE : he had sufficient light in his understanding to discriminate between moral good and evil ; to apprehend his creator's character and perfections, and thus form a just estimate of the excellence of his love and the terrors of his wrath ; he did not require, as man does in his depraved state, any outward revelation in order to discover what might be acceptable to Jehovah ; this was intuitively obvious to him by that knowledge which he originally possessed. Adam was created after the image of God in RIGHTEOUSNESS ; his will perfectly corresponded with the divine will ; whatever his understanding dictated as agreeable to the law of his God, that his upright will cheerfully assented to perform. No reluctance then existed in his pure uncorrupted soul towards what was spiritually good ; while his understanding unerringly pointed to his duty, his will as promptly performed it. Such was the character of Adam when the Lord God appointed him our representative in the covenant of works, and as the

station was dignified and responsible he was amply qualified for filling it.* His inclinations were all pure, all spiritual, and a law assigned him which it was equally his delight, and duty, and glory to obey.

2. THE appointment of Adam to be our federal head appears reasonable when we reflect that he was not only qualified for the undertaking, but constrained by every possible consideration to execute it with fidelity. He was bound by a reverence for Jehovah, who was a Being infinitely glorious ; possessing every possible perfection, and entitled to the homage of all rational creatures. As the majesty of the Eternal might have awed him, his bounty might have constrained him most promptly and cheerfully to obey whatever was commanded. Ten thousand argu-

NOTE.

** This sentiment is expressed in language both scriptural and sublime by the prince of poets.*

“ So fell

“ He and his faithless progeny ; Whose fault ?

“ Whose but his own ? Ingrate, he had of me

“ All he could have ; I made him just and right,

“ Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.

“ Such I created all th’ etherial powers

*“ And spirits, both them who stood and them who
 fall’d ;*

“ Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.”

MILT. PAR. LOST. book iii. line 97.

ments arising from the divine munificence might naturally have presented themselves to the mind of our first Father, exciting his gratitude, and perpetuating his obedience. The Lord God had lately called him into existence ; had promoted him to an exalted rank among rational beings ; had ordained him Lord of the lower world ; had placed him in Paradise, the most delightful part of creation, where all was beauty to the eye, all was music to the ear, all was fragrance to the smell. All these outward enjoyments were inconceivably heightened by the most intimate communion of his God. Add to these considerations that immediate, infinite interest which he had in fulfilling the condition of the covenant. He knew that a single transgression would expose to a forfeiture of all privilege, whether temporal or spiritual : He knew, on the other hand, that by a course of obedience for a limited time, he would secure these and incomparably greater privileges not only to himself, but to an off-spring more numerous than the stars of heaven. Is it possible for imagination to conceive a transaction more gracious on the part of heaven ? In it Jehovah stoops to be a party-contractor with the creature of his hand ; and on the condition of his personal obedience for a time, promises glory and blessedness to innumerable beings through the ceaseless ages of eternity. Is it possible to conceive a situation more dignified or desirable for Adam ? Was it not a

singular honor conferred on him, that when the whole human kind was embarked on one bottom, even the covenant of works, he should be appointed pilot, and placed at the helm ? Is it possible to conceive a transaction more advantageous for mankind than to have their interests entrusted with their common Father ; especially when we consider that his interests and theirs were inseparably connected ? What child could hesitate to confide in a parent thus happily situated, to advance its real interests ? It is no arrogance to affirm that if the countless millions of the human family had been present in one great congregation, they must have shouted their *amen* to the justice and condescension of the scheme ; they would have most cordially acquiesced in it as *ordered in all things and sure.*

3. THERE is another consideration which eminently displays the condescension of God, and may fully reconcile us to this part of his procedure : No sooner was the first covenant broken, than a new, and a more glorious dispensation was introduced. When the first Adam had violated his trust, and involved us in the curse, lo ! the second Adam, *the Lord from heaven*, instantly interposes, and more than repairs the injury sustained ; he brings *glory in the highest to his Father, peace and good will to our perishing world.* *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound ; and as sin reigned unto death, grace now*

reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. The second Adam, the great restorer of our apostate family, declares, *I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* Our nature, united to the divine in the Person of Immanuel, is promoted to a degree of glory beyond the very angels who were confirmed in their primitive state ; and a happiness more abundant is communicated through the mediation of Jesus than man could have enjoyed, had he fulfilled the covenant of works. May not this consideration silence every objection which can be entertained against that dispensation ? Are we not constrained to conclude that our interests were inconceivably dear to our Creator, when upon the breach of one plan ordained for life, a second was devised : When, upon the failure of our first representing head, his only Begotten, and Beloved Son was appointed the second.

THIS feeble attempt to vindicate the divine procedure in the appointment of Adam to be our federal head, I shall conclude with the remarks of two authors equally eminent for their talents, natural and acquired ; the one a distinguished ornament of the state, the other a singular light in the church. “ God made man righteous at first, and gave him a righteous law ; and in as much as man owed an infinite subjection to the author of his being, he owed an exact obedience

to this law of his maker : Yet God was pleased to give him this law, not only as the rule of his obedience, but as a covenant of life and death, wherein the first man made a stipulation for himself and his posterity : And this was just, for he had in himself the race of mankind. All succeeding generations were only pieces of Adam.—The law, which was his covenant, was a just and righteous law ; a law suitable to the endowments and powers of his nature. Again, the blessedness which, by his obedience, he was to obtain, was not of his own creating ; it was the free gift of God ; and it is but reasonable that the Lord of this gift should give it in what manner he pleased ; and it could not be unjust that the Lord, who gave this blessedness, should give it under what condition he pleased : But he gave it under most just and reasonable conditions, even an obedience to a just and reasonable law which suited with the ability and perfection of human nature. And therefore when, upon the breach of the covenant by man, he withdrew that blessedness from him and his posterity, he did no more than was most just for him to do. And we thus stand guilty of that sin which our first father committed, and are deprived of that life and blessedness which our first father had.”* Such is the reasoning of an eminent civilian on this subject, and

NOTE.

* *Lord Chief Justice Hale's meditations upon the Lord's prayer.*

to his remarks we shall add the observations of a distinguished divine. “ That God was righteous in this constitution is not to be disputed. For it does not become us to question the right of God, or to enquire too curiously into it ; much less to measure it by the standard of any right established among us despicable mortals, when the fact is obvious. We are previously to judge of God, *Thou art righteous in what thou speakest, and pure in thy judgment.* Truly he is unacquainted with the majesty of the Supreme King, who presumes to scan his actions, and call his equity to account. A freedom which no earthly father would bear in a son, no king in a subject, no master in a servant. And do we, mean worms of the dust, take upon us to use such freedom with the Judge of the whole universe ? As often as our murmuring flesh dares to bawl out, *the ways of the Lord are not equal* ; so often let us oppose to it, *are not thy ways unequal* ? Nevertheless we more calmly acquiesce in the determinations of God, when we understand the reasons of them. What if we should consider the matter thus ? If Adam had, in his own and our name, stood to the conditions of the covenant ; if having finished his state of probation he had been confirmed in happiness, and we his posterity in him ; if fully satisfied with the delights of animal life we had, together with him, been translated to the joys of heaven, no body would have complained that he was included in the head

of mankind : every one would have commended both the wisdom and the goodness of God : not the least suspicion of injustice would have arisen in any one, on account of God's putting the first Adam in a state of probation in the room of all. How shall that which in this event would have been deemed just, be unjust in a contrary event ? For the justice or injustice of actions is not to be judged of by the event."*

THE application suggested by this doctrine is both obvious and important.

WE learn from this doctrine, that the Lord God is an adorable sovereign ; that he possesses an unquestionable right to dispose of his creatures as appeareth good in his sight. In forming a plan for the government of his world, he is not obliged to consult the creature ; to enquire at the bar either of man or angel what scheme may be reasonable or proper : He acts like a God with a sovereign, absolute independence for the advancement of his own glory. He is revealed under a variety of titles the most majestic to express his infinite supremacy ; his unlimited dominion over all beings, and all their actions.—The LORD *of hosts* ; the CREATOR *of the ends of*

NOTE.

* *Witsius's Economy of the Covenants, vol. 1, chap. 2, sec. 16, 17.*

the earth ; the KING of kings, and LORD of lords are some of those names of royalty which he assumes to point out his adorable prerogatives. The LORD sitteth upon the flood ; yea, the Lord sitteth KING forever ; he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth ; none can stay his hand, defeat the accomplishment of his purposes, or say unto him, as an impeachment either of his wisdom or justice, what dost thou ? In what elevated, imperial style does Jehovah assert his authority over all, and his right to dispose of them as his sovereignty may dictate ? See now that I, even I am he ; and there is no God with me : I kill and I make alive ; I wound and I heal ; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever. I am the first and I am the last ; and besides me there is no God.

THE sovereignty of this holy Lord God appears visible in every operation of his hand ; in the creation of all things, no less than in their government and disposal. He forms an innumerable variety of beings ; endows them with different qualities and ordains them to different spheres of glory and happiness in the mighty scheme. He creates the angels first ; enstamps upon them the brightest semblance of his own perfections, and assigns them the highest rank in the order of intelligences. They are thus called *his holy an-*

gels ; his mighty angels : ministering spirits ; the angels of his presence, teaching us that they are admitted more intimately into the counsels of Jehovah than other orders of being, and promoted to a higher agency in the execution of his designs. Man, again, was placed next to the angels, formed after the image of his God, fitted both for advancing his glory, and being happy in his fellowship. Other beings are merely animal, and designed for no other than sensual enjoyments. But shall these inferior parts of creation rise up, and murmur against the arrangements of their creator ? Shall the ant which moves humble along the earth complain that it was made almost infinitely inferior in strength to the ox, or in stature to the elephant ? Shall the spire of grass find fault that it was not formed strong as the oak, or lofty as the cedar ? Shall the beast of the field complain that he was not endowed with the external dignity of man ; with his expressive countenance, his lofty carriage, his powers of understanding and utterance ? Or shall man murmur that he was created inferior to the angels ; that he possesses not their larger sphere of contemplation and action ? Certainly not. *Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus ? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor ?* And has not the great creator a right to display his sovereignty and wisdom in conferring one ex-

cellence on one part, and another excellence on another part of his workmanship? If he may with propriety, exercise this prerogative in the creation of all things, why not in their direction and management? We behold him immediately exercising this right, in appointing each angel, if the expression be allowed, his own representative and making his happiness to depend solely on his own obedience; we behold him by a mere act of sovereignty confirming a part of them infallibly in holiness, while the rest were left to their own will and permitted to fall. We behold him appointing one man to represent the whole human family, and afterwards passing sentence against them in consequence of his transgression. It becomes us, therefore, to adore in the submissive language of the Patriarch, *shall not the judge of all the earth do right?* Or in the loftier ascription of the holy angels, *great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints.*

2. LET us learn from this doctrine to acknowledge the righteousness of God in constituting Adam our representative in the covenant. Who can reasonably impeach the divine wisdom in appointing him to a work which he was fully able to perform; in assigning him a law which he could easily have obeyed to his own honor, and the endless felicity of millions that were to spring

from his loins ? Who is not constrained to admire the condescension of God in offering a privilege so great, immortal glory, to so many, even all the kindreds of the human kind, as the reward of obedience to one man, an obedience which he might have demanded without the promise of any reward whatever ? In permitting our first Father to abuse the freedom of his will, and deliberately bring ruin upon himself and a world, in this we must bow with profound submission and acknowledge as just what we may not be able altogether to comprehend.

*“ Jehovah’s ways in wise design
“ Are form’d upon his throne above,
“ And every dark or bending line
“ Meets in the center of his love.*

*“ With feeble light and half obscure
“ Poor mortals his arrangements view,
“ Unknowing that the least are sure,
“ And the mysterious just and true.”*

WHO can by searching find out God ? What finite mind can expand to explore the various plans and operations of this infinite agent ; or trace the important consequences which may result from particular arrangements ? *Who can find out the Almighty to perfection ? Clouds and darkness are round about him ; righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne. Con-*

sequences the most glorious have already arisen from the apostacy of the first Adam. On the ruins of the old covenant, an illustrious building of mercy is erected and established. A second Adam appears through whose mediation life and immortality are proclaimed to all who believe on his name. Here divine wisdom is displayed in devising a scheme by which the death denounced is actually inflicted, and yet the person, doomed to suffer, enjoys eternal life : mercy appears in compassionating our miseries and laying our *help on one that is mighty* ; holiness and justice shine in awful majesty by not sparing even the son of God when substituted in the room of sinners, but executing wrath upon him to the very uttermost. *God commendeth his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*

BE exhorted therefore to aim at justifying God in this mysterious transaction ; be humbled before him for the transgression of Adam your representing head ; acknowledge his failure as a sufficient cause for the divine controversy with our world ; as the dreadful source from which flow forth all our miseries both temporal and spiritual : then behold by faith that divinely gracious person who has *taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself*, and opened a *living way into the holiest of all by his own blood*. None stand a greater chance, humanly speaking, to obtain mer-

cy of the Lord than they who endeavor humbly to acquiesce in his dispensations ; none will more probably be delivered from the consequences of Adam's transgression than they who acknowledge the justice of Jehovah in imputing his guilt to their account. None, on the other hand, will more probably feel its weight than they who boldly deny the doctrine, or challenge the equity of the appointment. Men may possibly reason and dispute the belief of this truth out of their heads, but they cannot reason away the guilt from their consciences, nor that wrath to which they are exposed as a righteous consequence. *Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered ? He resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble.*

3. LET all be convinced from this doctrine, that, when Adam sinned, we sinned ; that when he was condemned, we, as represented in him, were really condemned ; that as his sons and daughters by natural generation, we are justly the sons and daughters of wrath. The very moment that he, as our federal head, plucked and tasted the forbidden fruit, a general curse was denounced against the human family ; we all, without the exception of one, *became guilty before God* : The very moment that the Lord God drove him out of paradise, you and I and all the kindreds of men were virtually shut out from

his favorable presence, and exposed to his fiery indignation. From Adam as our federal head we have derived guilt and condemnation ; from him as our natural root, we have derived corruption and death. Is it possible for a God of truth to teach any doctrine more clearly than he has taught our representation in the first Adam, and our obnoxiousness to wrath through his breach of the covenant ? *By one man's disobedience many were made sinners : By the offence of one judgement passed upon all men to condemnation : By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin, so that death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned.* How explicit is the Eternal God that he may bring home conviction to the conscience of every individual ? *As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse ; What things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world become guilty before God.*

4. WE learn from this doctrine the necessity, the indispensable necessity of being broken off from Adam the original stock ; of renouncing the covenant of works which denounces indignation and wrath against all who continue within its boundaries. Do you believe the living God when he declares, *In Adam all die ; The judgement was by one to condemnation*, and yet will you cleave to that old, barren, corrupted tree which

yields neither holiness here nor happiness hereafter? Do you believe the living God when he declares, *As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight*, and yet will you deliberately remain under its bonds? Is the house in flames over your heads and yet no anxiety about escaping? Do the lightnings blaze around you and yet no enquiry after a shelter from the storm? Are you bound fast in chains, the prisoners of indignant justice, without the least concern for deliverance? *The captive exile hasteneth that he may be loosed, that he may not die in the pit neither that his bread should fail*, and will you, can you remain unconcerned in all the horrors of your natural estate; *without God, without Jesus and without hope? Is there no balm in Gilead, is there no physician there* that you thus languish and perish in your diseases? *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people, for unto you is born a Saviour, even Christ the Lord*. Through his undertaking as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, all the injuries sustained by the first Adam are fully repaired. Did the former violate the law and come short of the glory of God; by the second it is magnified and made infinitely honorable. Did the first entail condemnation and death on all his natural offspring, he that believeth on the second hath everlasting life and shall not enter into con-

demnation. Did the first by transgression forfeit the favor and fellowship of Jehovah, the second is revealed as *the way, and the truth and the life,* and all who enter in by him *shall be saved.*—How reviving the thought, *he has made peace by the blood of his cross.* Here the cloud which blackened over our devoted heads suddenly evaporates, and a ray of hope beams upon the sickening eye, cheers the drooping spirit. *It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance,* infinitely, infinitely worthy of immediate acceptance, as it secures reconciliation with an offended God, imparts peace to the awakened conscience, and joy to the disconsolate heart, *that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners.* *He is the end of the law for righteousness,* will you not acquiesce in this law as fulfilled by his obedience and sacrifice? *He proclaims liberty to the lawful captives,* will you refuse that freedom which he has procured, procured at the expence of his own blood? *He has brought in everlasting righteousness,* will you deliberately reject this immaculate, this immortal robe? Come, fellow sinners, as ye are, come without any delay and cordially receive that saviour who is asking admission into your hearts: *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,* and all the blessings of salvation shall be yours; pardon shall be yours, *for there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;* adoption shall be yours, for those who are natu-

rally *as far off* become *nigh* by the blood of *Jesus Christ* ; reconciliation shall be yours, for *we are accepted in the beloved* ; *we are reconciled to God by the death of his son* ; eternal glory shall be yours, because *he that believeth in the son hath everlasting life*. The spirit and the bride say, come ; let him that heareth come ; let him that is a thirst come ; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. AMEN.

Sermon IV.

Death the Just and Natural Consequence of Sin.



ROMANS v. 12.

AND DEATH BY SIN.

YOUR meditations were directed, on the last Lord's day, to the preceding clause of this verse, *by one man sin entered into the world* ; we then attempted to confirm the scriptural doctrine, the doctrine maintained by the protestant churches throughout the world, of our representation in Adam, and consequently of our immediate concern in his transgression ; that when he disobeyed and fell, we, as represented by him, necessarily disobeyed and fell ; that *by the offence of this one man judgment has passed upon all men to condemnation* : We also attempted to vindicate the justice of God in that part of his procedure, by shewing that the appointment of Adam to be the representative of his posterity was not only reasonable, but calculated to promote their real interest.

FROM the passage now chosen for discussion, we are led to consider the direful consequences of this transgression ; *and death by sin*. But the subject is utterly beyond our research ; it incon-

ceivably surpasses what the pen of mortals is capable of unfolding, or the mind of mortals is capable of comprehending. To exhibit in its full extent the awful import of this monosyllable DEATH would be to recount all the miseries which have, like a mighty torrent, overflowed our world nearly six thousand years ; nay, it would be to represent all the wretchedness which this moment tortures the unnumbered millions of the human family ; all that some are now enduring from exquisite disease, others from nakedness and hunger, others from horror of conscience, others from the loss of connections dearer than their lives, *refusing to be comforted because they are not* ; others from the burning sun of a southern, others from the freezing cold of a northern region : These are all streams from that fathomless fountain which was opened by our transgression in Adam ; and do not make up the ten thousandth, thousandth part of the miseries which it issues forth ; to unfold the full meaning of this DEATH would require us to survey the regions of hell, and to represent the sufferings of the damned through the ceaseless ages of eternity to come ; the gnawings of that worm which never dieth, and the tormenting fury of those flames which shall never be quenched : To these we must also add all that wrath which was endured by the infinite surety from his cradle to his cross. *He was delivered for our offences ; He suffered for our sins the just for the unjust.* The

cup of trembling which he drank was filled up by the iniquity of man. All these curses were contained in that threatening, *in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, and to all these man became liable the moment of his transgression ; by that disobedience the curse of almighty God is induced on his body, his soul, his name, his estate, his enjoyments ; *the way of the wicked, the plowing of the wicked, and the sacrifice of the wicked are all an abomination to the Lord ;* the very ground on which they walk, the air in which they breath, the sun which was appointed to give light, the stars in their courses, the bread which ought to nourish, and the water which ought to refresh them are all cursed for their sake and occasionally employed as instruments of their destruction. *And unto Adam he said, because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it, cursed is the ground for thy sake ; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life ; Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee : Again, Cursed shalt thou be in the city and cursed shalt thou be in the field ; Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store ; cursed shall be the fruit of thy body and the fruit of thy land ; the encrease of thy kine and the flocks of thy sheep ; Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke in all that thou settest thine hand unto*

for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly. Are not these judgments executed upon us in some degree every day that we live? What frailty and consumption of body, what toil and sorrow in the labor of our hands; what vanity in every earthly enjoyment; what vexation and disappointment in our ordinary employments, what remorse of conscience for what is past, what horror of mind in the anticipation of what is to come, are felt by us until we return to the ground from which we were taken?

BUT that your meditations on this subject may be more distinct, I shall follow the ordinary method of considering this DEATH and view it as comprehending,

1. SPIRITUAL *death*, or the separation of the soul from God. This part of the curse is mentioned first, because it was inflicted upon Adam immediately after his breach of the covenant, and is first inflicted on his off-spring in their respective generations. Indeed, the soul in departing from the living God *dies* by a kind of necessity, as the branch immediately withers when separated from the vine, or the stream when cut off from all communication with the fountain necessarily dries up, or a member of the body *dies* when severed from the head. *They that are far from thee shall perish: All they that hate thee love death.* Man is therefore represented as *without*

strength, as dead in trespasses and sins. By these and similar expressions, we are not to understand that the soul ceases to exist, that its rational powers are annihilated, but they point out his utter incapacity for, and his obstinate opposition to all that is spiritually good. He is *dead in sin*, he is divested of the original, distinguishing ornament of his nature, the image of God ; he is *dead*, he is lost to the great end of his creation which was to “glorify God and enjoy him forever.” *Having the understanding darkened*, as the apostle expresses it, *being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.* This curse was obviously inflicted on our first Father immediately after his transgression. *I heard thy voice in the garden*, he exclaims, *and I was afraid and I hid myself.* *I was afraid* ; the language not of conscious innocence but of remorse for guilt ; he knew that he had forfeited the favor of his God, and he now trembled under apprehensions of his wrath : that bosom which was formerly serene, unruffled as the ocean in the calm, is suddenly wrought up into a tempest and refuses to be at rest ; is agitated alternately with bitter remorse for what is past, and fearful forebodings of judgment to come. *I hid myself.* A proof of that utter, awful darkness which now covered his understanding : What infatuation to attempt concealing himself from the view of that God, who, at one glance, surveys the universe ; to

whose all piercing eye heaven and earth and hell lie open ; to whom *the night shineth as day and the darknefs and the light are both alike*. The same blindness of mind often appears in his natural off-spring : they attempt *hiding* themselves from Jehovah by daring to commit in secret what they are afraid or ashamed to commit in the view of the world. As the understanding of Adam became instantly darkened, his will was seized with enmity the most malignant and invincible. The Lord God was obliged to *drive him out of paradise*, although he knew that the covenant was broken, and his title to any residence in the garden altogether lost ; *the cherubim with the flaming sword* must be placed to *keep the way of the tree of life*, although he knew that it was not his creator's will that he should now partake of that sacramental pledge. Such was the condition of Adam immediately after he had tasted the forbidden fruit, and violated the command of his God ; he became spiritually DEAD ; he lost the divine image ; he forfeited the divine favor, and as the apostle pronounces the lascivious woman, *was dead while he lived* ; he became morally and spiritually dead, although naturally alive. This dreadful forfeiture has been entailed upon his children from generation to generation ever since his fatal apostacy. Adam, we are informed by the sacred historian, *begat a son in his own image* ; inheriting his own *blindness of mind, hardness of heart, reprobate consci-*

science and vile affections, and with this depraved image of our Father all now enter the world.— We are shapened in iniquity and in sin do our mothers conceive us. The innocence of Adam, as he proceeded from the hand of his creator, *his righteousness and holiness* are not more positively asserted in scripture than the ignorance, the enmity, the alienation of man as he now comes into the world; and therefore with equal propriety we may doubt or deny the one as the other. *The carnal mind, that is, the mind of every man until renewed by divine grace, is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* So then *they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* We are represented as *without strength*, destitute either of inclination or ability to perform what is spiritually good; *without God*, deprived of his *likeness*, excluded from his comfortable presence and communion; *dead in trespasses and sins*, as unfit for the service and enjoyment of Jehovah as the body when naturally dead is unfit for the common offices and enjoyments of life: *aliens, strangers and foreigners*, as it were out casts from God, no longer acknowledged in his family; neither dignified with the name nor distinguished with the privileges of his children. Such is our proof from scripture that mankind are now spiritually *dead* and that this is a part of the curse denounced against the breach of the first covenant.

THIS judgment implies,

2. NATURAL *death*, or the separation of the soul from the body. The body of man was originally designed for an immortal duration, and for enjoyments suited to its material nature no less than his soul. But this glory departed from the body of Adam upon his departure from the living God, and is forfeited by all his posterity in virtue of his disobedience. *By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin.* As his soul was instantly struck dead, deprived of its moral beauty and excellence, his body from that moment felt the symptoms of decay and dissolution. These constituent parts of the human person, which are most intimately related, which might eternally have enjoyed a union the most endearing, and indissoluble, each adding to the dignity and happiness of the other, must now be subjected to a painful separation as a curse upon both ; while the *soul returns to God who gave it*, the body goes back to the earth to moulder and mingle with its “ mean original.”

It is argued by some that “ natural death is no part of the threatening contained in the covenant of works.” They maintain that “ the body of man being material in its nature is prone to dissolution by the very laws of matter.” But this supposition is utterly inconsistent with the divine perfections ? Can we imagine that a God infinitely wise would erect a fabric so fair as the hu-

man body, so dignified in external form, so admirably proportioned in all its parts, and calculated to reflect honor on its creator, and demolish it as soon as it was finished? Man frequently changes his plans of operation ; he alters or destroys this day, a machine which he constructed yesterday ; but this change arises either from want of skill in the contrivance or power in the execution. Who *can* consistently, or who *dare* ascribe such imperfection to the Eternal ? *The Lord is a God of knowledge ; he is wonderful, unerring in counsel, and excellent, omnipotent in working.* But as this supposition is improbable to reason, it is absolutely contradicted by divine revelation. *Life* in scripture is uniformly represented as the reward of perfect and perpetual obedience, and *death* as *the wages* of transgression.*

NOTE.

* “ *The Jewish Rabbins evidently maintain that if our first parents had persevered in innocence they had lived always. Manasseh Benj. Israel, in the middle of the last century, asserted that the immortality of the first man is founded on scripture and that many famous Rabbins, whom he cites, are of this opinion. He shews that this immortality of Adam agrees with reason, since there was no inward cause in him which might produce death, and that he had nothing to fear from external causes, living in a delicious and agreeable place where every thing was subject to him, while the fruit on which he was to feed, encreased his strength and preserved his health.*”.....CALMET’S Dic. of the Bible, on the word *Death*.

In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die ; The wages of sin is death. By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so that death has passed upon all men, because all have sinned. The consideration that Adam did not die immediately after his fall ; that *he lived several hundred years and begat sons and daughters*, is no objection against the doctrine which we maintain. The criminal is rarely executed when the sentence is passed upon him ; the court for particular reasons may, and generally does postpone his execution for weeks, or months, or even years ; yet during all this period he is considered *dead* in law ; he is cut off from the privileges of a citizen, and the continuance of his life from day to day is not a matter of right, but depends wholly on the pleasure of others. Such was the condition of our first father upon his failure in the covenant of works. The sentence of *death* was solemnly pronounced upon him ; he became *dead* in the estimation of law and justice, and the enjoyment of his natural life another day, or hour, depended purely on the sovereignty of Jehovah his judge. Besides, in postponing for a time the actual execution of the curse, the Lord God contemplated Adam as the parent of a numerous offspring : He also intended to afford him the offers of reconciliation through the adoreable surety who had already interposed.

To such reproach and misery is the body of man

now subjected on account of transgression; As a partaker with the soul in sin, it must also be a partaker in suffering; it has now become frail and mortal, exposed to innumerable toils and afflictions in life, and is doomed at last to the dreary prison of the grave. *It is appointed for all men once to die, and after death the judgment.*

BUT there is another *death* infinitely more awful and that is

3. THE separation of both soul and body from the fellowship of God, and their endless torment under the most overwhelming expression of his wrath. *The wicked shall be turned into hell; and all the nations that forget God. These shall go away into everlasting punishment.* The soul and the body, being separated from each other under the curse of a broken covenant, shall hereafter be reunited and *come forth to the resurrection of damnation.* This may be considered as the full and final execution of divine vengeance on impenitent sinners. The miseries of the ungodly in the present state of existence are intermingled with many mercies; the bitterest cup which any are doomed to drink on earth is infused with some ingredient which renders the draught at least tolerable, but in hell *they have judgment without mercy. They shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy*

angels, and in the presence of the lamb. Through the most gloomy cloud which overcasts the sinner in time, some cheering ray occasionally beams forth to revive and support ; or if the gloom be impenetrable to day, he hopes that to-morrow's sun will rise more fair, but in hell there is reserved for him *the mist of darkness, the blackness of darkness forever and ever.* Is the mind now distracted with the horrors of guilt, or forebodings of future wrath, the body is, perhaps, at ease and in health ; or if the body is tortured with exquisite pain, the mind may be serene and composed ; the one may be instrumental in the support and consolation of the other : but in hell he is tormented to the very uttermost in both soul and body : each instead of ministering to the support, will inconceivably aggravate the misery of the other. Even after death, when the soul of the unbeliever *has gone to its own place,* the body is at rest in the grave ; there, if it be excluded from pleasure, it is also exempted from pain ; but in hell both are awakened to sufferings the most exquisite, and unabating, *even the vengeance of eternal fire :* Here the unrighteous are favored with the enjoyment of *many good things ;* they are often distinguished with the greatest share of temporal pleasures and profits and preferments : there their pleasures must give way to pain ; their honors *to shame and everlasting contempt ;* and their outward affluence to poverty and want,

the denial of even *a drop of water* to ease their anguish in the flames. *The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels ; in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power.* Such is the knowledge of evil which Adam derived from eating the forbidden fruit ; he incurred the penalty denounced and became liable to *death ; death* spiritual, natural, and eternal. But this misery was not incurred merely on himself ; the shock is felt by every son and daughter that has sprung from his loins, and will be felt by all succeeding generations. With more than the lightning's speed, it pervaded the human family and shook the very pillars of the earth. *In Adam all died :* " All mankind by their fall lost communion with God, are under his wrath and curse, and so made liable to all the miseries of this life, to death itself and to the pains of hell forever."

I FEEL constrained to notice an objection which has been frequently, and vehemently urged against this doctrine of christianity. The enemies of revealed truth have pronounced it " injustice in the extreme, to inflict calamities so awful, for an offence so inconsiderable ; to doom a world to everlasting misery merely because an in-

dividual* tasted a little fruit that was forbidden." They have confidently asserted, "that there is

NOTE.

* Paine, in his age of reason, assails this article of christian faith with railery, his common and most successful weapon : He speaks in the most wanton, contemptuous manner of the "story of Eve and the apple :"
He pronounces it a most ridiculous "conceit that the almighty should come to die in our world, because they say one man and one woman had eaten an apple :"
Men generally form their estimate of the enormity of sin, rather from the tenor of their own conduct, than from the dictates of sound reason or divine revelation. It is therefore reasonably to be expected, that a man who has indulged to a proverb, all conceivable filthiness, both of the flesh and spirit, should think little of ordinary crimes. But supposing that Paine had considered "the story little and ridiculous," ought he not to have spoken, and written of it, in a style more decent and respectful ? Waving the consideration that this event is recorded by inspiration of God, as the origin of all our misery, has it not been firmly believed by millions of his fellow men ; by millions who were as capable of examining its evidence as himself, and were, at least, as honest to acknowledge the result of their examination ? Has it not been publicly vindicated with the mouth, and the pen, by hundreds in different ages ? By hundreds who have equally outshone himself in the improvement of their understanding, and the excellence of their morals. But he who does not fear God will not regard man. That bosom which is an utter stranger to the generous emotions of love or reverence for the majesty in the heavens, cannot entertain much respect either to the feelings or judgment of mortals.

not even the shadow of proportion between the crime and the punishment." To all these reasonings and murmurings of man it might be sufficient to reply, that the Lord God is best acquainted with the nature of his own government, with the majesty of his own law, and is therefore most capable of determining what particular punishment ought to be inflicted on the offender; and the mortal, who insolently *finds fault*, who arrogantly asks by way of cavil or complaint, *what doest thou*, uses such liberty at an infinite peril. Besides, shall the living God be denied a prerogative which is readily allowed to all legislators upon earth? they claim the privilege of enacting their own laws; they determine, without consulting every subject, what penalty shall be executed upon the transgressor of these laws; and shall HE, *whose throne is in the heavens, whose kingdom ruleth over all*, who is universally acknowledged as KING of all other kings, and LORD of all other lords, shall HE be denied a prerogative which is claimed by every petty prince and potentate on earth? Must HE, *by whom kings reign*, from whom their authority is now derived, and to whom they are responsible for the exercise of that authority, must HE enquire of every moral agent what laws should be enacted, or with what penalties these laws should be sanctioned?

BUT the transgression of Adam, if duly exam-

ined, is not so inconsiderable in its demerit as it may at first appear. An offence always rises in aggravation in proportion to the dignity of the person against whom it is committed, and our obligation to love and obey him. An insult offered to a magistrate or prince is deemed a greater evil, and consequently exposes to severer punishment than an insult to an ordinary man : An offence therefore committed against Jehovah, who is a being infinitely glorious, a being infinitely entitled to our love and obedience, must be an infinite evil, and expose the offender to an infinite punishment. Besides, the act of our first father in eating the forbidden fruit, which is frequently thought a trifling offence, when examined in all its circumstances, must be acknowledged as manifesting ingratitude and insolence in the extreme. Let us suppose that a parent favored one son above every child in his family ; gave him authority over the rest, appointed him the sole heir of his estate, and allowed him the unlimited enjoyment of all that he possessed, with the exception of a single article ; but commanded him under the severest penalty to leave that untouched, merely as an expression of love and subjection : Nay, let us suppose that the father engaged to this son that, upon condition of his refraining from that article, he would entail the estate upon him and his off-spring for ever.—Should this son, thus highly favored, immediately and wantonly intrude in the instance prohibi-

ted ; who would not reprobate at once his ingratitude and infatuation ; who would not justify the father in immediately disinheriting both this son and his issue. This is only a faint representation of the favor manifested to Adam, and his ingratitude and infatuation in abusing it. The Lord God formed him after *his own image*, admitted him into the most intimate fellowship with himself, gave him *dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth* ; placed him in the garden of Eden, causing to grow *every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden*, as a visible pledge of that eternal life which he should receive as the reward of obedience ; *of every tree of the garden gave him liberty freely to eat with this single restraint, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it.* As the Egyptian monarch addressed Joseph, Jehovah virtually addressed the first Adam, *thou shalt be over my house and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled, only in the throne will I be greater than thou* ; “ I make over as thine this lower world, the cattle on ten thousand hills, and every thing that moveth upon the earth to be ruled by thee ; all the fruits of Paradise to be at thy disposal and for thine enjoyment, only in excepting the tree of knowledge of good and evil I claim the pre-eminence ; in this instance I must manifest that, although thou art lord of the

earth, I am Lord over thee." When all these circumstances are impartially considered, the high dignity to which Adam was promoted, the exalted privileges which he already possessed, and the still greater which he might have secured for himself and his countless posterity, must we not pronounce his intrusion upon that tree as the most shameful abuse of the divine bounty, and a most daring contempt of the divine authority and prerogatives? Had some difficult service been required which it was almost impossible for man to have performed : had some costly sacrifice been demanded, or had the reward proposed been unworthy his reception, the sentence might appear more rigorous : but nothing was enjoined only abstinence from a single tree, the fruit of which he could as well have wanted, and this restraint to continue for a limited* time while never-ending happiness was assured him as

NOTE.

* *It is an opinion entertained by some that the command to refrain from this tree of knowledge respected only the fruit of that season, and that, had Adam obeyed during that year, the restraint would have been removed and he confirmed in happiness. But as the inspired historian does not particularly mention how long the prohibition would have continued, all that can be said, as to the period, amounts to no more than conjecture : but it is probable that the probationary state of man would very soon have terminated and that he, upon condition of perfect obedience, would have been promoted to a higher degree of glory and joy.*

a reward for his submission. All murmuring against the sentence as severe must therefore be instantly silenced. We are left to deplore the frailty of human nature in its most perfect state, to be humbled for the ingratitude, the presumption of our first parents in boldly trampling on the divine command, to acknowledge the righteousness of God in manifesting his displeasure by immediately driving them out of paradise, and in pouring upon them, and us, as represented in them, such awful and complicated miseries.—

We lie down in our shame, and our confusion covereth us, for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our Fathers from our youth unto this day, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord our God.

IN the application of this doctrine we may remark,

1. That there is an inseparable connection between sin and suffering. Causes are not more necessarily connected with their correspondent effects in the natural than in the moral world. *The soul that sinneth it shall die : Every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompence of reward. God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.* This is a principle frequently denied. Many, with the pretension of magnifying the mercy of God, would veil the glories of his justice ; they flatter

themselves with the enjoyment of *peace though they walk in the imagination of their own hearts* ; nay, they practically hold the living God at defiance either to annex penalties to his laws, or to execute these penalties upon the offender. But let us enquire whether such a government, or rather, such a want of government can be consistent either with the perfections of a moral ruler, or with the order and happiness of the moral world. Suppose that a parent became all indulgence to his family, permitting the various members to make their own inclination the standard of their conduct to him and to each other ; would we pronounce this unrestrained indulgence an excellence in that parent, or would it ultimately tend to his own dignity and their advantage ? Must not confusion soon prove the reproach and ruin of that house ? Would not the children of such a parent probably become the pests of each other, and of society ? Suppose that all civil law was abolished in the United States, or, which is the same thing, that the penalties of the law were not inflicted on the transgressor, what would be the consequence ? Would this mild administration conduce to the honor of our government or the welfare of individuals ? Would not vice immediately rear her head and become universally triumphant ? Would not the virtuous part of the community either be the sport of the profligate or be ensnared and corrupted by their evil examples ? If laws and

penalties are requisite in the small circles of families and nations, how much more in the unbounded sphere of moral agency ? It is therefore evident that the honor of God as the moral governor of the universe ; that the glory of his justice, of his holiness, of his truth require *that his wrath be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.* To suffer the sinner to escape unpunished would be a practical acknowledgment that the law was unjust, or that he was unable to execute the threatening denounced. The delay of punishment upon transgressors is no objection against the vindictive justice of Jehovah. By exercising forbearance towards the sinner he proves, *that he is slow to anger ; that he is long-suffering, and abundant in goodness,* and that he is rather delighted in the display of his mercy. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering ; not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.* Judgment delayed will be executed with proportionably greater fury hereafter. The longer the divine arm is suspended, the more patiently that a sovereign God has borne with the individual or nation, the greater opportunities he has afforded them, the more affectionately he has expostulated with them to return and live, the more sudden and awful will be their visitation at last. *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy.* These

things hast thou done, and I kept silence ; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes.

2. We are taught, from this doctrine, the fearful condition of every man by nature, he is spiritually *dead* ; he is already under sentence of condemnation ; he is suspended every moment over the mouth of a *burning lake*, and nothing but a brittle thread keeps him from dropping into its devouring flames. If the Lord God of Gods be true, this is their condition while they remain related to the law as a covenant of works. How explicit and awful is his declaration respecting man in his present, fallen estate ? *As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* The curse of the almighty lies on all that they are, and all they enjoy ; on their bodies and souls ; on their health and affliction ; on their prosperity and adversity ; on the air which they breathe and the ground on which they walk. Their very mercies are preparing them as heirs of wrath for execution, and their judgments are the *first fruits* of a full harvest of perdition. *Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest ; this shall be the portion of their cup.* Each unrenowned, unjustified person is as really in a state of

condemnation as the devils or the damned in hell. *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.* This, sinner, is thy privilege that thou art yet *a prisoner of hope*, and the gates of *the city of refuge* stand open for thine admission. *Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* But wilt thou dare to *continue in sin*, because *grace abounds* ; or wilt thou waste in spiritual sloth the few hours or moments of thine *accepted time* which yet remain ? We could not believe the indifference, the stupidity, the more than brutal stupidity of man, did not our eyes actually behold it ? Was it related to us that a colony of subjects had rebelled against their sovereign, and were tried and condemned as traitors ; did we hear that their execution was postponed, and an opportunity offered them of acknowledging their crime and returning to their allegiance ; did we hear that the sovereign out of pure compassion to them, and in order to vindicate the majesty of the law, appointed his own son to suffer death in their room ; were we informed that notwithstanding this exercise of forbearance, of mercy, many of them remained indifferent or obstinate ; some slighting, others openly spurning both his favor and his frown : Was such a fact related, must we not be struck with secret horror at their madness, or

pronounce it utterly incredible? We should consider it impossible that rational beings could be so lost to common sense. But is there even a comparison between their infatuation and the folly, the madness of the majority of mankind? They daringly rebelled against God and became obnoxious to his wrath; when their pardon was impossible without satisfaction to justice, he ordained his *only beloved son* to suffer and satisfy in their room; he gives the most solemn assurances by word and oath that he has no pleasure in their death, but is rather desirous that they would return and live, and yet at the peril of everlasting destruction, *they make light of his entreaties*; they go to *their farms or merchandise* as if there was neither a soul to suffer, nor a God to inflict.

BE exhorted, fellow sinners, to awake this day from your security; adore that God who is yet sparing you in the place of repentance; it is *of the Lord's mercy that you are not consumed*, that the death denounced against your transgression is not already executed, your bodies consigned to the prison of the grave, your souls plunged into the depths of hell, and your condition rendered helpless and hopeless forever. This is perhaps the desperate situation of thousands, who were not more guilty by nature and practice than you: adore that grace which has pitied your miseries and opened up a door for your escape. *God hath commended his love towards us,*

in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. We believe and do testify that the Father sent his son to be the Saviour of the world. Evil angels were not more daring in their rebellion against the throne of their sovereign, nor involved deeper in wretchedness than you, yet no mercy is exercised towards them. They are cast down to hell and delivered unto chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgment. Again, while you adore the long suffering of God in sparing you so long, and his mercy, in laying your help on one that is mighty, hasten without any delay to the covert of his blood. How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation ; your indifference another hour hazards your all for eternity : your judgment now of a long time lingereth not, your damnation slumbereth not, and that sword of the avenger which has hitherto spared may the next moment be bathed in your blood. A free, a full, an everlasting salvation is now offered, surely you will not choose death rather than life, and the curse rather than the blessing. Seek righteousness, seek meekness ; it may be ye shall be hid in the day of the Lord's anger.

3. WE learn from this doctrine that since all are spiritually dead, those who are saved must obtain salvation altogether of God ; they are incapable of contributing either in whole or in part to their own recovery. The man who is naturally dead, cannot possibly restore himself to life ;

he cannot by any effort of his own, either live or breathe or move. All outward means are utterly insufficient for the recovery of a lifeless corpse ; food may be offered but cannot afford any nourishment ; medicine may be administered, but cannot heal or produce any desirable effect. It is the prerogative of Jehovah to impart natural life ; *he breathes into the nostrils of man the breath of life, and renders him a living soul.* It is no less his prerogative to impart spiritual life ; to raise the sinner from the death of corruption to a life of holiness and of glory. *It is not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts ; Not by works of righteousness which we do, but according to his mercy he saves us by the washing of regeneration, even the renewing of the Holy Ghost.* The exceeding greatness of that power which was exerted in the resurrection of our Lord Jesus from the dead is no less exerted in the regeneration of the soul ; that almighty voice which, at first, which, every day, *commandeth the light to shine out of darkness must shine into the heart, giving it the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* The sinner may search the scriptures ; the authority of the living God binds him to that duty ; he may pray, earnestly asking mercy of the Lord ; the command of God binds him to the performance of that duty ; he may meditate frequently on his own ruin and the remedy brought in by the everlasting surety ; he may attend the

gospel purely preached and all the means of salvation, but he cannot by any power of his own give efficacy to these ordinances or command the blessing : He is *without strength, his understanding is darkened, he receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* While I would earnestly press you to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling ; to strive that ye may enter in at the strait gate ; - to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, I would entreat you to attend every mean under a full impression that you must be drawn of the Father ; that HE must work in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Are you utterly insufficient of yourselves, unable either to commence or maintain this spiritual life ? Despair not of relief ; the Lord God waits to be gracious by infusing this immortal principle ; he is exalted in shewing mercy, by perfecting strength in your exceeding weakness. *I will put my SPIRIT within you,* is his promise of love, *I will put my spirit within you, and ye shall live : I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David : I will put my laws in their minds and write them in their hearts : I will be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.* Encouraged by these and ten thousand other promises ; believing that he is infinitely faithful who hath promised, draw near and supplicate in the language of the publican, “ Lord, be merciful

to me a sinner ; breathe mightily on my slain, that they may live ; only speak the word and thy servant shall be healed ; the slave of corruption shall become a child of God and an heir of everlasting life : Whatever else thou art pleased to withhold, deny me not the assurance of thy love and an interest in thy great salvation : Seeing thou hast not spared thine only son, but didst deliver him up for our guilty, polluted, perishing world, wilt thou not with him freely impart all that I need for enriching me both in time and eternity."

4. LET those who have some scriptural evidences of being *alive to God*, be taught from this doctrine that to his rich, unmerited, self-moving grace they are indebted for this unutterable blessing. To such I may repeat the language of this apostle to the believing Ephesians, *God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved you ; even when you were DEAD in sin hath quickened you together with Christ*. Are there not multitudes of your own acquaintances ; some that were perhaps nurtured at the same breasts, trained up in the same family, educated in the same school, instructed under the same ministry, who enjoyed equal opportunities both publicly and privately that are to this day DEAD ? They are yet lying under the accumulated guilt of their nature and lives : The curse of God is upon them, the wrath of God hangs over them, and they are, notwithstanding, *at ease in Zion* :

devoted to the pursuits and pleasures of a perishing world. *Who hath made you to differ from such? Who taught you to see, while they remain spiritually blind, and raised you to life while they continue spiritually dead? He that hath wrought you for this self same thing is God, who hath also given you the earnest of the spirit, until the redemption of the purchased inheritance unto his own glory.* Great, infinitely great are your obligations to Jehovah the spirit for what you already experience, and what yet remains for you in certain prospect. Once, Christians, ye were blind, ignorant of God, ignorant of Jesus, of your own spiritual and everlasting interests, but now you see; *you are made wise unto salvation; the eyes of your understanding are enlightened to know what is the hope of his calling and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints; once you were afar off, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, but are now brought nigh by the blood of Jesus Christ; brought nigh by a relation which shall never, never be broken; once you were dead, under sentence of condemnation, groaning beneath a weight of guilt which might sink a world to hell, but are now legally alive, are completely accepted through the righteousness of Jesus the surety, and unalienably entitled to the inheritance of heaven.* Could you only conceive the ten thousandth part of what has been freely forgiven you, or the mercies

which are laid up for you in store, you could do nothing but wonder and adore ; your hearts must be all gratitude, and your lips must constantly overflow with the melody of thanksgiving. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people ; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.* Depend each day and hour and in every appointed mean on the gracious Spirit for perfecting that *good work* which he has already begun. As he is the *author*, he must also be the *finisher* of your spiritual life and consolation : Aspire after greater conformity to God as your *chiefest* glory, and after the more intimate, uniform fellowship of his love as your pre-eminent joy. Amidst all the afflictions of earth be looking forward with confident expectation to the blessedness and the glories of the heavenly world.

To Father, Son and Spirit, who, moved by the richest grace, begin and perfect our salvation, be ascribed by every heir of this salvation *glory in the highest now and forever.*—
AMEN.

Sermon V.

Reconciliation with God unattainable by Human performances.



ROMANS iii. 10.

THEREFORE BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW THERE
SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS SIGHT.

THIS verse is properly an inference drawn from the preceding verses. The apostle had been confirming the doctrine of human corruption ; he had been proving that it was universal, extending to all mankind, to each individual whether male or female, in every period of time, and every nation under heaven. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God ;* he argues that this corruption was universal extending not only to mankind in general, but to all the thoughts, the words, the actions of each individual ; *their throat is an open sepulchre,* like a medium through which the abominations of the corrupted heart issue forth, *with their tongues they have used deceit ; the poison of asps is under their lips ; there is no fear of God before their eyes ;* he afterwards exhibits the fearful consequences of this corruption, that we are thereby involved in guilt, and exposed to destruction and *shut up,* like a criminal already

tried and convicted, from any excuse or apology that can be mentioned. *Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law that every mouth may be stopped, and that the whole world may become guilty before God.*

IN the verse which has been read for our present consideration, the apostle sums up the argument, and asserts that salvation is altogether unattainable by any righteousness of our own.—*‘Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; “ formerly,”* as if he had said, “ formerly I have proved that all *the world is become guilty before God ;* now I assert that they cannot, by any services which they perform, atone for that guilt, or secure themselves from future condemnation.

THE *law*, so frequently mentioned in this and the other epistles of Paul, sometimes signifies the ceremonial institutions ; that system of worship which was divinely communicated to Moses and constituted, in a certain sense, the gospel of that dispensation. It is therefore declared *the law*, that is, the ceremonial *law is a shadow of good things to come*, all the rites and ceremonies and sacrifices then existing were of a typical nature ; they respected something afterwards to be realized in the death and resurrection of Messiah the glorious antitype ; it is called, upon another occa-

sion, a *schoolmaster leading us to Christ*, the various washings, which the spiritual worshipers then used by divine institution, and the various sacrifices which they offered up, all directed *to the lamb of God* ; they all pointed the eye of the believing Israelite to something in the undertaking or offices of Jesus Jehovah, who *appeared in the fulness of time, and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself*. This ceremonial law was done away by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, just as the shadows of the evening vanish at the appearance of the rising sun. But the law mentioned in our text is much more comprehensive in its nature ; it is that moral law which was con-created with man ; which was written on his conscience and his heart by the finger of the living God, and is binding upon men in all countries and ages. *By the deeds of this law, by all that obedience which we may attempt to render, we cannot be justified in the sight of Jehovah.*—The design of the apostle is evidently to 'cut off the sinner from all hopes of salvation by his personal righteousness or attainments ; it is to shew that neither the heathen by improving the light of nature which they enjoy, nor we by all our external advantages, living under a written revelation of the divine will, neither they, nor we can possibly recommend ourselves to the favor of the Eternal ; we cannot by all our performances, however sincerely rendered, secure justification now, or everlasting life hereafter. In order the

more effectually to level *each high towering imagination* of the creature, the apostle is most explicit, *there shall NO FLESH*; he extinguishes every ray of hope from every son and daughter of Adam by their own works; he stops equally from all boasting the mouth of the splendid, vain glorious moralist, and the debased, profligate debauchee; he shews that the expectations of both for acceptance with God on the foundation of merit are alike vain and delusive.

YOUR attention was lately directed to the alarming situation of man by nature: It was proved by the highest possible evidence, the testimony of God himself, that *all are naturally children of wrath*, that this curse was incurred by the disobedience of Adam, their covenanting head, and binds them over to misery, both temporal and eternal. *By one man's offence death reigned by one: by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation.*

It is our present design, with a humble reliance on the eternal spirit for direction, to prove that salvation from this death is utterly impossible by human attainments; that no sinner by his obedience, his repentance, or reformation need expect remission of guilt, or reconciliation with a righteous God.

1. JUSTIFICATION by our own works is im-

possible because we are unable to atone for past transgressions ; we cannot repair the injuries already done to the divine law, by having omitted what it requires, and committed what it absolutely forbids ; and without this satisfaction for former offences, acceptance or reconciliation is not to be expected. The law cannot, will not forgive without ample satisfaction ; sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than remission be granted for a single transgression without full reparation for the injury done. The moment that the offence is committed the person is *bound hand and foot and thrown into prison*, until he pays what he owes. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die. He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all.* Now what method can the sinner embrace in order to make such satisfaction ? Will he proceed to repent of his former conduct ; to express a cordial sorrow that he had sinned against God and resolve an amendment for the time to come. Let us examine for a moment whether satisfaction of this nature would be accepted by an earthly judge. Suppose that a man convicted of murder should acknowledge his crime, should express the most unfeigned sorrow for what had happened, that he had been chargeable with such an outrage upon society, and then resolve that he would by no means be guilty of repeating the offence ; would this give satisfaction to the law ? Would it atone for the blood of a fellow citizen which has flown at his hand, and restore the offender

to the privileges of society ? Certainly not. And shall the law of God which is infinitely perfect, which is a transcript of the divine *holiness and justice and goodness*, suffer the transgressor to pass unpunished ? Or will our obedience to its demands this day satisfy for the omission of yesterday ? Therefore we are informed that *the law worketh wrath* ; binds over to eternal misery every subject that does not perfectly and perpetually obey it : again, *curfed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*. This single testimony of the living God determines the question beyond all controversy and leaves the sinner *neither root nor branch* of expectation from any performances of his own ; it pronounces him *accursed* not merely who is abandoned in every part of his conduct : who wantonly tramples on every divine command ; who *neither fears God nor regards man*, but dooms to despair *every one that continueth not in all things* ; who does not keep the whole law, in all its requirements, on all occasions and amidst all circumstances ; it shuts up under sentence of wrath as to his own merit every transgressor* of any command. We

NOTE.

* “ *Shew me the man,*” is the challenge of an ardent, ingenious writer on this subject, “ *shew me the man who has never offended in one point : who hath continued in all things prescribed by Jehovah’s perfect law ;*

therefore conclude that *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified*, because none can satisfy for past offences ; we cannot do more at any time than the law absolutely requires for that particular time.

2. Justification by our personal performances is unattainable, because we cannot render perfect obedience for the present. The law admits of no imperfection ; it demands perfect, personal and perpetual obedience, or denounces condem-

who loves the Lord with all his heart, and his fellow-creatures as himself : shew me the man, who from the first to the last moments of his life, comes up to the standard : and then you will shew me a man who can be justified by works of his own." TOPLADY'S caveat against unsound doctrines. Equally appropriate are the following remarks of another truly devout, evangelical author. " Upon the very first offence the law cuts the sinner off from all claim to the promised reward, and as to any thing that he can do cuts him off forever. It is not in his power to make himself innocent again. Having once failed in his obedience, the law knows nothing of mercy, cannot accept the greatest repentance, nor accept the deepest sorrow for what is past ; but immediately passes sentence according to what is written ; Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. If you fail in one single instance of obedience, you fall under the curse of the broken law, and are as much liable to punishment, though not in the same degree, as if you had failed in every instance."—ROMAINE'S Law and Gospel, Ser. 2.

nation against failure in the least degree ; it requires that every thought, every word, every action be perfectly holy and conformed to its unerring standard ; that *we love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our mind, and with all our strength, and our neighbour as ourselves : This do, and the law promises, thou shalt live ; this fail to do and the law proclaims, thou shalt surely die.* It is not sufficient that we refrain from the grosser pollutions of the world, or discharge the outward duties of christianity ; to all this the scribes and the pharisees had attained ; they were not *extortioners, unjust, nor adulterers ; they fasted often, and gave tithes of all that they possessed ; but unless our righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees we shall not enter the kingdom of God ;* it is not sufficient that we discover some zeal for the ordinances of God, or some concern for the advancement of his glory ; to this the apostle had attained in his natural estate : *Concerning zeal he persecuted the church ; touching the righteousness which is in the law he was blameless, and with these performances he was alive* in his own estimation ; he imagined that no other righteousness was necessary ; *but when the commandment came ; when the law reached his conscience with discoveries of its purity and spirituality, he DIED ; he despaired of acceptance with God on the foundation of these partial, imperfect performances ; he beheld this outward*

obedience as falling infinitely short of the divine command. Such is the perfection of the law that it extends to the heart ; it particularly notices every thought, every suggestion that secretly passes in the mind, no less than our words and actions. The man *who hates his brother in his heart*, the law considers as virtually a murderer ; the man who *looks at a woman to lust after her*, it condemns *as having committed adultery with her already in his heart* : The most secret workings of corruption in the mind are a breach of the law and expose to condemnation. When therefore we realise the purity, the spirituality and extent of the divine law ; that it arraigns before its bar, not only actions, but our very thoughts, we are brought to the conclusion, that *by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in his sight* ; because none are capable of rendering perfect and perpetual obedience ; none are able to conform their hearts and lives to this eternal standard of righteousness. *The carnal mind is enmity against God ; it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.*

That justification is unattainable by our own obedience is evident,

3. FROM the confession of the redeemed in every age. What has been the experience of the righteous in all generations ; of those who had attained to the most eminent degree of sanctifica-

tion ; who were most distinguished for the mortification of the flesh, and for the habitual holiness and spirituality of their frames ; what has been the experience of such, but an experience of their utter, infinite frailty ; of their absolute insufficiency for performing the will of Jehovah : When they turn their eyes upon their own hearts what do they behold, but innumerable imperfections, much blindness of understanding, much coldness, and carnality of affection, much proneness to evil, little inclination to what is good ; when they turn their eyes backwards and survey the years that are gone, what do their lives appear, but a series of departure from the living God ? They are mortified at the recollection of vows made but never performed ; they acknowledge their imperfections in every relation of life, whether to God, to their neighbors or to themselves ? None who have ever realized the spirituality of the divine law, or the mystery of iniquity in their own hearts would depend on any works which they perform for a thousand worlds ; their persons, they will frankly confess, need to be adorned wholly and exclusively with the imputed righteousness of Jesus the mediator, their prayers to be perfumed with the incense of his intercession, their repentance requires to *be repented* over, their very tears need washing in the laver of his cross. Hear the testimony of Job, who was pronounced *perfect in his generation*, and was certainly inferior to none of his age ci-

ther in the purity of his heart, or the spotlessness of his conversation; *Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.* David the man after God's own heart exclaims in the bitterness of his soul, innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up, they are more in number than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me. *If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord who shall stand. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* We might pursue our enquiries from David the king to Isaiah an eminent prophet of the Lord and prove from his language the infinite insufficiency of human attainments for reconciliation with God. *Woe is me,* he exclaims beholding himself in the blaze of divine holiness, *for I am undone;* he utterly despairs of acceptance on the footing of his own performances, *I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the KING the LORD of HOSTS:* He makes confession of his own impurity, and the impurity of all around him: He acknowledges that if the Lord God should deal with him or them according to the rigours of his justice, they could not possibly be acquitted; destruction from the divine presence must be unavoidably their doom. Let us pass

over from the prophets of the Old, to the Apostles of the New-Testament dispensation, who enjoyed a still clearer revelation of the divine will, and a more abundant unction of the sanctifying spirit. Their testimony perfectly harmonises with that already delivered. We hear the eminently loving and beloved disciple frankly professing, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us : Again, if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin,* is the testimony of the great apostle of the Gentiles. *For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh dwelleth no good thing ; for to will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.* What is the amount of all this evidence ; of all the acknowledgments which we have heard from the lips of patriarchs, and prophets and apostles ? Does it not undeniably evince the *imperfection* of the most *perfect* ; their utter inability to work out a justifying righteousness, and consequently that *by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified with God.*

4. THAT justification is unattainable by human merit appears from the very substitution of the eternal Son in our room, and the introduction of another method of reconciliation. To suppose that apostate man could be restored to the favor of God by his own obedience is a daring impeach-

ment of that wisdom which devised a different plan ; of that love which *set forth*, exhibited the *Son of God to be a propitiation through faith in his blood* ; of that justice which exacted of him in the character of surety the full payment of our debt ; of that faithfulness which proclaims aloud, *THERE IS NO SALVATION IN ANY OTHER ; he that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him.* Is it probable that the eternal God would have had recourse to a scheme so singular, so astonishing, if an ordinary method could have vindicated the honors of his government ; or that he would have secured our redemption at an infinite expence, even the blood of his own Son, could an inferior price have satisfied the demands of his justice ? *If righteousness came by the law,* then Christ is dead in vain ; all the*

NOTE.

* No uninspired man, either before or since the apostles, understood more thoroughly the doctrine of a sinner's justification than the German Reformer ; I trust therefore that the sincere enquirer after truth will be both pleased and profited with the following quotation from his writings. " For what need of Christ hath he who is able by the merit of congruence before grace to obtain grace, and then to do such work as by the merit of worthiness after grace, he is able to deserve eternal life. Then take away Christ with all his benefits, for he is utterly unprofitable. But why was he born ? Why was he crucified ? Why did he suffer ? Why was he made my high priest, loving me, and giving himself an inestimable sacrifice for me ? In vain, and to no

glory of that grace, that sovereignty, that wisdom which shines so illustrious in our reconciliation by his sacrifice is utterly obscured ; all his sufferings in the manger and the garden and the cross, however numerous and painful and reproachful, were undergone to no purpose ; they neither reflect glory on any perfection of Deity, nor impart lasting consolation to us. Nay, the substitution of another in our room ; the transfer of our iniquity to his account, and the imputation of his righteousness to us are founded on this principle as their very basis, THAT PARDON BY HUMAN ATTAINMENTS WAS IMPOSSIBLE. *If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness would have been by the law ; that is, if man could possibly have entered*

purpose at all, if righteousness come by other means ; for without grace and without Christ, I find no righteousness either in myself, or in the law." This truly great and good man afterwards indulges himself in the most elevated contemplation of Jesus as his Saviour and portion. " Mine eyes shall behold nothing else but this inestimable price, my Lord and Saviour Christ ; he ought to be such a treasure to me that all other things should be but dung in comparison of him ; he ought to be such a light to me, that when I have apprehended him by faith, I should not know whether there be any law, any sin, any righteousness or any unrighteousness in the world. For what are all things which are in heaven and earth in comparison of the Son of God Christ Jesus my Lord and Saviour, who loved me and gave himself for me ?.....LUTHER on Galatians, c. 2. v. 21.

the holiest of all through the channel of the former, now violated covenant, *a new and living way would not have been opened up.*

5. THAT justification cannot be attained by the deeds of the law appears evident from this consideration, that in scripture it is uniformly ascribed to divine grace through the righteousness of Immanuel. In all the sacred history there is not an instance of a single sinner accepted, or a single transgression pardoned by any performances of the creature. Surely if reconciliation had been possible by the obedience of man, some who have gone to glory must have had reason for boasting, they might have ventured, at least to divide the honor of their salvation with the grace of Jehovah. But what says the heavenly oracle? *Abraham believed God, and this faith, in opposition to works, was counted to him for righteousness; David also describes the blessedness of the man, to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works; to whom Jehovah accounts the obedience of another for reconciliation independent of their attainments, or worthiness. Again, we are justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* Is it possible that a doctrine could be expressed in language more explicit and undeniable? *We are justified, we attain the full, the everlasting remission of all transgression, BY GRACE; this blessing infinitely*

precious in its nature, *is a gift* absolutely unmerited, conferred on the thrice happy subject without money, without price ; we are justified **FREELY** by grace ; is our pardon a blessing infinitely rich, it is divinely **FREE**, unclogged by any conditions, unmerited by any works of the creature ; we are justified freely by grace through **THE REDEMPTION** that is in Christ Jesus ; the obedience and sacrifice of the ever-adorable Surety are exclusively the procuring cause of this inestimable benefit : the blood which flowed from his side cancels the catalogue of our past transgressions, and his righteousness imputed by the Father forms our title to future privileges ; neither our love, nor repentance, nor patience dare enter their claims for any part of the honor ; indeed was it ignorantly offered them, they would willingly lay it all at the Saviour's feet, devoutly exclaiming, *not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory* ; even faith itself, which may be pronounced the Prince of graces, occupies no higher station in the justification of man than that of an instrument : It is like the *feet* which carry the soul to the Saviour ; it is the *hand* which applies the healing balm, and *puts* on the adorning robe ; it is the *mouth* which feeds upon Jesus as the bread of life, the water of life, and the wine of everlasting consolation. *By grace we are justified, by grace we are saved through faith and that not of ourselves ; it is the gift of God.*

ADD to these arguments the representation which is given us of the ransomed already in glory. They are described as reaching their celestial mansions, not through any worthiness of theirs, but only through the merits of Jehovah their advocate. *These are they which—have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb : Therefore, in virtue of their union to Jesus, and their pardon and purification through the efficacy of his sacrifice, are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple.* These exalted spirits know nothing, they acknowledge nothing but *Jesus Christ and him crucified, as the author of their salvation ;* they look back to that *decease which was accomplished at Jerusalem* as the source of all that they have already obtained, and of those exceeding, eternal joys which await them in prospect ; and at each recollection of that event they kindle into a higher extacy of wonder and gratitude ; they cast their crowns before the throne, and exclaim in more elevated accents, *Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood. To him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God, even the father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

As an improvement of this subject, it is natural to infer—

1. THAT all may despair of pardon now, or

salvation hereafter, by their obedience to the law, as a covenant of works. The omission of one duty enjoined, or the commission of what is forbidden in a single instance, places the sinner beyond the reach of hope as to his personal performance or merit. This is the doctrine of the law, and the prophets, and the apostles. *The scripture hath concluded all under sin*; all of every nation whether Gentile or Jew; all of every character, whether more pure, or more profligate; it hath *shut them up under sin*, under sentence of wrath, as the criminal is shut up in a prison from which he cannot possibly escape of himself; where he must languish until the hour of execution, unless his offence be freely forgiven him. As easily might the angels, who were cast down to hell, break off their *everlasting chains*, and regain their mansions in bliss, as man by his feeble efforts can procure the favor of God, or a title to that glory which he has forfeited. *As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse*; For it is written, *cursted is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*. Let all remember, therefore, as they regard their peace in time, and honor and happiness through eternity, that they must secure a righteousness more perfect than their own; by any obedience which they *have* performed, or *may* perform they cannot be justified in the sight of a righteous God. The accumulated merit of all the saints on earth; the accumulated merit

of all the saints and angels in glory would be insufficient to expiate the guilt of a single sinner, much less secure him a title to the kingdom of heaven.

2. LET all be impressed with their absolute inability to obtain salvation by their own performances. Whilst thou art resting on thine own righteousness, thou art *laboring in vain* ; thou art *spending thy strength for nought and in vain* ; thou art preparing a garment of *fig-leaves* which cannot cover thy nakedness, or secure thine acceptance in "the fiery test of the judgment day." *Wouldest thou enter into life thou must keep the commandments* ; thou must perfectly fulfil the law in all its demands, upon all occasions. But I solemnly appeal to thy conscience and ask, hast thou come up to these high requirements in times past, or art thou capable of attaining this spotless perfection in the time to come ; Hast thou, indeed, *loved the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and strength, and mind* ? Hast thou *loved thy neighbor as thyself*, and manifested this love by sincerely endeavoring to promote his reputation, and interest ? If thy life has been conformed to this unerring standard, thou art more perfect than patriarchs or prophets who freely acknowledged that *in many things they all offended* ; who repented in *dust and ashes* for their numerous and aggravated failures. But art thou conscious of having failed in a single instance

thy mouth is stopped from this moment ; thou art, by thine own confession, become guilty before God, and by the deeds of the law canst never be restored to his favor. Behold all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks ; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled ; this shall ye have of my hand ye shall lie down in sorrow.

3. Is there no possibility of pardon by the covenant of works, let all rejoice that a new, and more glorious method of reconciliation is revealed. *The righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets ; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe.* With what transports of gratitude and joy should these tidings be heard ? How cheerfully and thankfully should this divinely perfect righteousness be embraced by every sinner of the human family ? Who that was involved in debt without the least prospect of making payment would not accept of relief from the hands of a surety ? Who that was convicted of some capital crime would not rejoice at the message of pardon from the lips of his sovereign ? But immunities infinitely greater are procured and now tendered by Jehovah in the character of Jesus. He obeyed the precept of that law which you were unable to obey ; he endured that penalty which you had incurred, and under which

you must have groaned through eternity ; he *has blotted out*, with his own blood, *the hand-writing which stood against you*, which bound you over to the curse and *has nailed it to his cross*. Are you sensible of your danger, and longing for relief, then behold by faith the bleeding, dying saviour. Are you without strength to perform the high demands of the law, *his name is called the mighty God, because he saves to the uttermost all who apply* ; Have your iniquities abounded, mercy, through his atoning sacrifice, *much more abounds* ; *Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

Now, beloved hearers, what think you of this glorious freedom ? Is it answerable to your miseries and wants ? Is it worthy of your acceptance ? Or in opposition to the dictates of your own consciences, enlightened by the word of truth ; in opposition to the experience of the faithful in all ages ; in contempt of threatnings the most awful, of invitations the most endearing will you dare to appear in the “rotten rags” of your own attainments ? Remember that by refusing submission to the righteousness of Jesus, you despise your own mercy, you extinguish the only ray of hope that ever irradiated our benighted world. The Lord God has proposed the challenge, and the collected wisdom of heaven and earth and hell can never answer it, **HOW SHALL YE ESCAPE IF YE**

NEGLECT SO GREAT SALVATION? May he convince you of sin, then will you be satisfied that a saviour is necessary; may he discover to you the majesty of his law, then will you welcome that Jesus who *is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.* AMEN.

Sermon VI.

The Righteousness of Jesus infinitely sufficient for the Justification of all who embrace it.

ROMANS x. 4.

FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH.

THE wisdom of man is frequently baffled, and his power defeated in attempting to accomplish his most favorite schemes. A thousand designs, conceived in his imagination, are never realised, either through want of skill in the contrivance, or ability for the accomplishment. But the Eternal mind is restrained by no bounds, nor embarrassed in its operations either by difficulties, or opposition. *With God nothing is impossible. The counsel of the Lord standeth forever, and the thoughts of his heart to all generations.* Does his sovereignty propose a particular plan as eligible in itself, and calculated to advance the majesty of his name, his wisdom readily devises the means, and his power infallibly secures the execution. He beholds the end from the beginning; he surveys at one thought, principles with their remotest consequences and knows the best means for effecting the best designs. With what majesty do his perfections

break forth in the creation, and redemption of our world? *He speaks, and it is done*; the different ranks of being, animate and inanimate, rise into existence, and assume the station prescribed them; confusion gives place to order, darkness yields before the approaching light, and from the formless, unsightly mass, creation rises fair at the voice of the creator. He speaks again, and a work inconceivably more arduous is accomplished; the world is redeemed from that ruin into which it was plunged; the divine glory appears most illustrious where it had been most obscured, and an open door is presented for the return of apostate, miserable man. *And he saw, exclaims the inspired seraphic Isaiah, and he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor*; therefore his arm brought salvation and his righteousness it sustained him; he has conciliated the seemingly jarring attributes of Deity; he has preserved in perfect harmony mercy and truth, righteousness and peace, while good will is announced to us. *For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh; he gave him to be the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

IN the verse immediately preceding our text, the apostle exposes the folly of the Jews in attempting to establish their own righteousness for

justification ; he maintains that acceptance with the Father on the foundation of human works was utterly impossible ; that the very expectation of attaining this end arose from ignorance of God ; from misapprehensions of his justice in taking vengeance on transgression ; from imperfect views of his law in its purity, requiring a perfect, perpetual obedience under the penalty of death ; he argues also, that this fond attachment to their own services proceeded from their ignorance of the suitableness, and sufficiency of that righteousness which had been accomplished by the infinitely glorious Redeemer. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God.* He then adds with peculiar emphasis in the verse which we have read, *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.*

THE righteousness of Christ usually signifies his active obedience, his fulfilment of the divine law in its preceptive part ; but in the present instance it must be considered in a sense more extensive ; as comprehending both his active and passive obedience ; his enduring the penalty, no less than fulfilling the precept of the moral law ; in short, the righteousness here mentioned includes all that he accomplished for our pardon, and acceptance ; for our redemption from that wrath to

which we were exposed, and our title to that glory which we had altogether forfeited.

ON a late occasion I endeavored to prove that salvation is not to be expected by the covenant of works; that no flesh can be justified with Jehovah by their moral excellence, or attainments. But this inspired oracle promulges a different method for our acceptance; a method more august in itself, more honorable to each perfection of deity, and more suitable to the present circumstances of man; it exhibits the eternal Son as *finishing transgression, and thus becoming the end of the law for righteousness to all the chosen.* And while we humbly aim at illustrating the excellence, the all-sufficiency of this redemption, may a ray of Messiah's glory beam on every understanding; may his rich, unequalled, unmerited love captivate and constrain every heart in this assembly.

THE Lord Jesus may be pronounced the end of the law for righteousness, because,

1. HE freely obeyed the precept, and endured the penalty of the law. His whole life from its commencement in Bethlehem to its consummation on Calvary was a course of the most cheerful, uninterrupted obedience to the will of his Father. Every duty which was incumbent upon him as man and mediator, whether in a private, or social, or religious capacity he discharg-

ed with constant fidelity, and unspotted perfection. As a child he cheerfully submitted to the authority of his parents ; as a son of Abraham, and consequently included within the Jewish pale he received the *seal of circumcision* ; as a member of the Gentile church, and the author of the christian dispensation, he submitted to the ordinance of baptism ; as a man, indulging the finer feelings of the human heart, he *went about doing good* ; he relieved such as were in circumstances of wretchedness, and mingled his tears with the disconsolate mourner ; as a subject of the Roman government he paid tribute, and *thus rendered unto Cesar the things that were Cesar's* ; as the prophet of his church he diligently instructed the multitude and *preached righteousness in the great congregation* ; as the high priest of our profession he offered up fervent prayers and intercessions for the people : he sought mercy in behalf even of his betrayers and murderers : *Father*, he affectionately expostulates, *Father forgive them for they know not what they do* ; as a King he displayed his almighty power, and royal prerogatives by performing a series of miracles the most splendid, alternately feeding the hungry, healing the diseased, raising the dead, and casting out devils from the bodies of those that were possessed. He thus upon all occasions obeyed the law in its most rigorous requirements. It was his meat and his drink, his desire and delight to do the will of his Father that sent him, and

to finish his work. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners. Pilate who concerned him was constrained to acknowledge, I find no fault in him ; the Jews, whose hands were encrimsoned with his blood, could not accuse him of sin, and the powers of hell, although wrangling with a fury the most implacable, yet reluctantly exclaim, thou art THE HOLY ONE OF GOD.

As he obeyed every precept of the moral law, he fully endured its penalty ; he sustained all that wrath which was denounced against the breach of the covenant, and is inflicted on the impenitent either on earth or in hell. No trial can be conceived, either temporal or spiritual, which the son of God did not sustain in the extreme ; he suffered in his body, in his soul and reputation ; he experienced, in their turn, *weariness, hunger, thirst, poverty, and nakedness* ; he was disowned and abandoned by his friends, derided and persecuted by his enemies. But as the small rivulet is lost when it empties into the fathomless ocean, so all the sorrows, which this *man of sorrows* endured in his life, are forgotten when we contemplate the infinitely more exquisite agonies of Gethsemane and Calvary. There it *pleased the Lord* pre-eminently to bruise him, and put him to grief ; those hands which had been often extended in offices of love to man were tortured with nails ; that head which had worn the crown

of universal dominion, is mangled with the mock *crown of thorns*; those lips which had been uniformly occupied in imparting instruction to man, and offering praise to God, break forth in the plaintive exclamation, *Is there any affliction like unto mine affliction? Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me*; that side, which had often heaved with emotions of pity for his Brethren and concern for their salvation, is pierced by the accursed spear; that soul which had been all devotion to God, and benevolence to men is now melted by the lightnings of divine indignation. *He made his soul an offering for sin; he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*

CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness,

2. As he both obeyed and suffered in the nature which had sinned. It was indispensably requisite, in order to our reconciliation, that the law of Jehovah should be honored, both in its precept and penalty, by our nature which had offered the insult. He, therefore, who appears in the character of a mediator for man must himself be man, that he might be capable of suffering in the same nature which had sinned.

“Man disobeying,

Die he or justice must, unless for him,

*Some other able and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death."*

JUSTICE demanded that as man had committed the offence, he should make satisfaction ; that as he had injured the glories of the law, by trampling on its requirements, he should repair the injuries either in his own person, or the person of a surety. Suppose that a Being however exalted had appeared in the form of an angel ; had rendered the most uniform, perfect obedience to every precept of the moral law, and endured ten thousand sorrows : this obedience, these sufferings could neither have atoned for our transgression, nor restored us to the favor of our offended sovereign. As man had deliberately offered the insult, it is a principle supported alike by sound reason, and divine revelation that his nature should both suffer and satisfy. The Son of God, therefore, interposing as mediator, appears in *the likeness of sinful flesh, and becomes obedient unto death.* He assumed a body to suffer and expiate as a substitute for their bodies, and a soul as a substitute for the souls of his people. The apostle thus mentions with peculiar emphasis, *verily he took not on him the nature of angels,* he was not substituted in their room, he did not satisfy for their salvation, *but he took on him the seed of Abraham.* For as much as the children were made partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that thro' death he might destroy him that had the power of

death, that is, the devil. This word was made flesh, is the testimony of an evangelist unerringly directed by the same spirit, the Eternal Son, the essential Word of Jehovah was made flesh, assumed the manhood into real union with his Godhead and dwelt among us ; he was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons. Exult, O believer, in the infinitely tender, endearing name Immanuel, God with thee, in thy nature ; thou hast not an high priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of thine infirmities, but being really bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh, he is in all things tempted as thou art ; in all thine afflictions he is sensibly afflicted ; he knows experimentally thy frame ; he remembers that thou art dust, and although elevated to the highest throne he most tenderly sympathizes in all thy sorrows.

CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness, as

3. HE obeyed and suffered in the room of his people, as their surety and substitute by an eternal transaction. It was this consideration which constituted him the Lord our righteousness, and rendered his obedience and blood satisfactory to justice in our behalf. It is the consideration of his vicarious sufferings which emboldens us to plead at the bar of an accusing con-

science and of a condemning law the merit of that sacrifice which he offered up.

THE Son of God might have assumed the nature of man ; he might have submitted to the law of his Father both in its precept and penalty, without any advantage to our perishing world. But all that he did, and all that he endured, had an immediate relation to his chosen ; every act of obedience which he performed, and every instance of suffering which he experienced was exclusively in their name, standing in their stead, considered in their room by his own voluntary, everlasting agreement. He is therefore designated the *second Adam*, because he embarked in the covenant of works precisely where the *first Adam* was shipwrecked ; and became the representative of a spiritual offspring, as the other had been of a natural offspring ; he undertook to *magnify* that law which the former had degraded, and to expiate that curse which the former had incurred. *For as by the disobedience of one many were made sinners, so, in virtue of a similar constitution, by the obedience of one many are made righteous.* Messiah is also denominated *the surety of a better testament* or covenant. To whom is this character usually and properly applied ? To him who voluntarily engages in behalf of another ; who becomes obligated to fulfill some contract in which the other had failed. Paul became surety for Onesimus by undertaking to pay what he

owed. The eternal Son is therefore denominated *surety* for man, because he actually assumed their debt ; he appropriated their sins to himself by which they became no less his own in the estimation of law and justice, than if he had personally committed them. *The Lord hath laid on him, charged to his account, the iniquity of us all. He hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* As the Son of God, in the capacity of surety, assumed the debt of his people, at his hand the payment was required to the uttermost farthing. That wrath, in its very essence, and in all its accumulated horrors, which must have been inflicted on them, was executed upon him their sponsor. He suffered the punishment of loss ; those smiles of his Father's countenance which he esteemed better than life, were utterly denied him ; not a ray of light was afforded to gild that gloom, which overcast his spirit, or sooth him in his hour of agony. While *darkness was over the earth*, a cloud infinitely more awful and impenetrable, enveloped the soul of the surety. *My God, my God*, he exclaims, through exquisiteness of inward distress, *my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ?* To the punishment of loss was added in the highest possible degree the punishment of sense. His body was subjected to sufferings the most excruciating, and his soul was

overwhelmed with successive billows of divine indignation. Such was the pressure of wrath which he endured, that *great drops of blood* burst from every pore of his body, *all his bones were out of joint, his soul within him was melted like water, and he was brought into the dust of death.* He suffered for our sins, as an apostle expresses it, *the just for, in the room of, the unjust, that he might bring us to God.* He bore *OUR* sins in his own body upon the tree, those crimes which we had committed were transferred to Jesus our substitute, that curse which had been denounced against us was literally and awfully executed upon him, *that we being delivered from wrath, might live unto God.*

CHRIST is the end of the law for righteousness, because,

4. His sufferings, being the sufferings of Jehovah in our nature, were infinitely and everlastingly meritorious. His obedience and sacrifice, partaking of the perfection of his Godhead, were a complete compensation for all the demerit of human transgression. It was formerly mentioned as indispensably requisite that our mediator should be man, that the same nature which had sinned might suffer; it was no less requisite that he should be God in order to render his sufferings a full satisfaction. The reconciliation of our world to the favor of God, was a work in-

finitely surpassing the ability of a mere creature, however exalted. *No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him.* The obedience of ten thousand angels could not compensate for the injury of a single transgression because being finite themselves, they are incapable of making an infinite atonement. Did we conceive in our imaginations, a created intelligence, possessing excellencies ten thousand times greater than any angel, or all the angels in glory, his obedience through unnumbered ages could be no satisfaction for a single offence of man; he owes for himself all that homage which he can possibly render, and consequently has no righteousness to spare for another: in proportion as his powers are enlarged, his obligation to obey his creator and Lord is necessarily increased. But every act of suffering endured by the GOD-man, the WORD *made flesh* was divinely valuable for the expiation of our guilt: every act of obedience which he performed was divinely meritorious for confirming our title to the immortal inheritance. He who undertook to become *the end of the law for righteousness* to us was really and essentially and everlastingly *the Mighty God, the Lord of glory, the express image*, or counterpart of his Father's person, and suitable to his uncreated, underived perfections as God, is the perfection of that redemption which he accomplished as Mediator. Prophets and evangelists, eminently enlightened by the Holy Ghost, appear

to emulate each other in extolling its excellence and all-sufficiency. *A great salvation, an everlasting righteousness, a plenteous redemption,* are terms which, in their turn, they ascribe to it. They pronounce this *work of righteousness to be peace, and the effect of this righteousness to be quietness and assurance forever.* They rise higher in their contemplations of this delightful subject and exhibit Messiah, the anointed One, as *finishing transgression*, really annihilating sin with respect to his chosen as if no such thing had ever been known, blotting out each letter of the curse that was marked against them, expunging it so completely from the written law, and from the records of heaven that it can never be mentioned or thought of against them ; *as making an end of sin, as making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in everlasting righteousness :* as presenting *an open door* through which the miserable outcast may return not to an earthly but a heavenly Paradise ; *a living way* by which the most profligate wretch may enter the holiest of all from which he was excluded by transgression ; as procuring a *better inheritance*, a brighter crown, and a more elevated throne than were forfeited by our fall.

THE following important and comfortable inferences are naturally suggested by this doctrine.

1. THAT the law of God is neither annulled, nor

relaxed in the sinner's reconciliation through the righteousness of the Eternal Son. It is argued by some that after the first covenant was broken, a new law was introduced; a law milder in its demands, and more accommodated to man in his fallen condition. But a change of this nature is utterly impossible. To suppose that the law is altered, is to suppose that the perfections of Jehovah are altered, because it is a transcript of his perfections, *of his holiness and justice and goodness*. Besides, this position arises altogether from mistaken apprehensions of the character in which the Son of God appeared. If the creditor receives payment, it is to him a matter of indifference whether it be immediately from the original debtor, or from the hands of some other person, interposing in his behalf: If the punishment threatened against a particular crime be actually executed, it is of no consequence whether it be executed on the person committing the offence, or on some other who undertakes to suffer in his room. The majesty of the law sustains no injury by a transfer from the one to the other. Neither are the glories of the divine law, by any means, obscured in our remission through the sacrifice of Immanuel. *He was made of a woman*, really clothed with human nature, *made under the law*, that very law in its covenant form which was violated by Adam, *to redeem them that were under the law*, to pay down the price exacted by divine justice as the condition of their par-

don, *that we might receive the adoption of sons* : Its precept was infinitely honored by the obedience of his life ; and its curses completely exhausted by the sufferings of his cross : Nay, it is no presumption to assert that the moral law, in every possible requirement, is more completely fulfilled by the redeemed in Jesus, their representative, than in the punishment of evil men, or angels through eternity. Suppose that two persons became involved in a debt of one hundred talents, and both were unable to make payment : Suppose that a friend undertook for one of them, endorsed his obligation, and at the demand of the creditor, tendered the full amount : The other, without ability himself, and without a friend to aid him, is cast into prison, and there languishes for life. By whom, in these circumstances, is the creditor most fully satisfied ? Certainly by the man for whom the surety interposed. In the former instance he demands the payment of his debt, and the demand is immediately answered : In the latter he is constantly requiring, but his claims are never satisfied. The application of this comparison is obvious. Men and angels, as transgressors of the divine law, were insolvent : Jesus-Jehovah, in the character of surety, steps forward and tenders to his father's justice its utmost claims against his people.

*“ The ransom was paid down. The fund of heaven,
Heaven's inexhaustible, exhausted fund,*

*Amazing, and amazed, poured forth the price,
All price beyond. Though curious to compute,
Arch-angels failed to cast the mighty sum."*

BUT the others are eternally punished, yet full satisfaction is never obtained.

2. IT may be infered from this doctrine, that the believer in Jesus is perfectly free from the law as a covenant of works ; he is altogether delivered from its authority either to command, or to condemn ; he possesses a righteousness utterly independent of any excellence or obedience of his own. In virtue of his union to Jehovah incarnate, and his interest in the redemption of his cross, he is as completely discharged from the law in its covenant form as the debtor is discharged from a bond already paid up and cancelled ; or as the woman is discharged from obligation to a husband already divorced or dead. Christ Jesus the Lord is, to all that believe, *the end of the law for righteousness* ; he as the second Adam, fulfilled in all respects its condition, and thus obtained, for them, *an eternal redemption*. This doctrine, so essential to the glory of Jesus, and so interesting to the consolation of his people, the apostle illustrates by various comparisons and in the strongest language which he is capable of employing. He pronounces *the law to be fulfilled in them*, not indeed in their own persons, but in Jesus their advocate, *who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit* : He repre-

sents the infinite surety as seizing *the hand-writing that stood against them*, that thundered the heaviest charges on account of their transgressions, as blotting it out with his precious blood, as nailing it to his cross, and rendering it void for ever : He announces to the converted Romans, *Ye are also become dead to the law by the body of Christ*, by the infinitely efficacious sacrifice which he presented when he bore your sins in his own body on the tree : He proclaims, for the encouragement of every awakened, trembling sinner, that now *the righteousness of God without the law*, independent of our personal obedience to its precepts for acceptance with the father, is manifested ; *even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe.*

BUT does this doctrine lay the ax to the root of christian obedience, or give permission to continue in *sin because grace abounds* ? *God forbid.* Those who thus argue were never taught of God the Spirit, nor felt the constraining influence of a saviour's love. The former instructs, and the latter obliges the heaven-born soul to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; to yield every member as an instrument of righteousness unto holiness ; to shew forth alike, by the language of their lips and the obedience of their life, the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvellous light. Every one that hath

this hope in him, a hope of which the Holy Ghost is the author, and eternal life the end, purifieth himself ; it is as natural for him to abound in the fruits of righteousness, as for the living fountain to send forth water, or the healthful tree to put forth its bud and blossoms in their season. The love of Christ, whenever and wherever it is savingly shed abroad in the heart, necessarily constrains to love him, and to manifest this love by keeping his commandments. It then becomes the delight, as it is the duty and dignity of the favored subjects to live to him who died for them : What shall I render to this dear, dying Lord for all his mercies : “ What tribute of praise shall I tender for the condescension of his birth and the sufferings of his cross,” must be the unfeigned enquiry of every ransomed spirit on earth ; this will be the more ardent, elevated enquiry of all the ransomed through eternity in heaven. They who came out of great tribulation, who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb, who stand before the throne, SERVE God ; they cast their crowns at his feet, and pour forth unceasing hallelujahs of praise ; this is their exercise, not occasionally, not at distant intervals, but day and night, without weariness, or interruption or end ; and what is the weighty argument that excites to such extacies of wonder and praise, Thou wast slain, they add, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.”

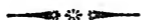
3. CONSOLATION flows from this doctrine to the children of the kingdom, when agitated with a consciousness of guilt, or alarmed with symptoms of their father's displeasure. *There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.* The believer most mortified to the world, and most advanced in the spiritual life, is chargeable with innumerable failures. Owing to the prevalence of strong corruption, and a deep conviction of guilt, his head often hangs down, his heart desponds, and he is ashamed to lift his eyes towards the mercy-seat, or lip out *abba-father*. But, christian, disconsolate christian, amidst all thy disquietudes, *look to Jesus, as the end of the law to thee for righteousness*; behold by faith *this lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world*; and then apply his most precious blood for removing its terrors from thy conscience. Here is an ocean of merit, a boundless, fathomless ocean, which can never be exhausted; and although millions and millions of thy brethren have obtained pardon and peace in this laver there is room for thee; it flows as plenteous now as when first announced in paradise, or first opened in Calvary. *There is redemption in the blood of Jesus*, thanks be to his name; redemption not barely for the failures of yesterday, but for those which may be committed to-day; not merely for the imperfections of this day, but for all those short comings with which, through the infirmity of grace and the power of indwel-

ling lust, thou mayest hereafter be chargeable ; for all these, there is a full, an eternal *redemption, even the forgiveness of sin according to the riches of his grace.* Are these the true sayings of God, receive them for thine immediate consolation and support. Is the holy law, once broken by thy transgressions and uttering its curses against thy crimes, now pacified through the merits of thy saviour's cross ; does it proclaim, *there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ ;* do the holy angels announce, *peace on earth, and good will, all complacency towards men :* Is the everlasting father *well pleased for his righteousness sake,* mayest not thou repose thy soul with all confidence beneath this covert from the storm ? *Shall not the blood of Christ, who, through the Eternal Spirit offered up himself to God, purge thy conscience from dead works to serve the living God.* O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou longer doubt ? Lift up thine head, and appropriate the ancient and joyous exclamation, *Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me ; Still trust in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.* These humble triumphs of faith will shortly be succeeded by the bolder and nobler song of Moses and of the Lamb, *Unto him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood ; and hath made us kings and priests to God, and his father ; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever.* AMEN.



Sermon VII.

The agency of God the Father in the appointment of Christ to his Mediatorial undertaking. A Sacramental Sermon.



ROMANS, iii. 25.

WHOM GOD HATH SET FORTH TO BE A PROPITIATION THROUGH FAITH IN HIS BLOOD.

WE rarely find more than one excellence eminently to adorn the same individual.—As it appears to be the general arrangement of providence, that every man should possess some amiable or respectable quality, to raise him above abject insignificance and contempt ; it appears to be equally its order that no man should combine in himself all that is amiable or respectable, lest he rise to universal admiration, and to unlimited influence in the world. In every character, even the most debased, there is discernable some shade of merit which secures a portion of esteem ; so in the most exalted, important character there is generally some capital defect that sinks him nearly to a level with the mass. Although Job is held forth to all ages as an illustrious pattern of patience, Moses of meekness, Solomon of wisdom, Paul of ardent zeal, and

Peter of heroic, unshaken fortitude ; yet neither of these personages was distinguished for all these endowments. But in Jehovah every possible excellence exists, in equal, infinite perfection : Here is wisdom which never errs ; which never fails to employ the best means for executing the most important purposes ; Here is justice, absolutely inviolate, which ever holds the balance with equal hand, and renders to all rational agents *their due* : Here is goodness ever flowing, ever diffusing happiness through his creation in a manner consistent with the honor of his government ; Here is holiness without the least spot of pollution ; which can neither tempt, nor be tempted ; which cannot behold iniquity without abhorrence ; which cannot look upon rectitude without complacence and delight : Here is truth which will inviolably, and infallibly accomplish all that is threatened, and all that is promised.— These perfections of God which appear obvious in all his works, burst forth with ten-fold effulgence through the cross and mediation of his Eternal Son. There we see justice absolutely refusing to spare sin, and mercy ardently expostulating to spare the sinner ; we see wisdom interposing, by offering a plan that will bring glory to God in the salvation of man ; and love delivering up his only son to the awful, arduous work. *Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.*

THE Son of God, on a late occasion, was held forth as *the end of the law for righteousness* ; as answering all its requirements by the obedience of his life, and removing its penalty by the sacrifice of his cross ; consequently all who believe in him, who accept the gift of his all-perfect righteousness, as offered in the word of reconciliation, are instantly and everlastingly delivered from the law in its covenant form : Interested in the sacrifice and satisfaction of Jesus their substitute, they are considered no longer *under the law* ; they are not subject to its authority, binding them to obedience at the peril of condemnation, *but under grace* ; they possess a title to every blessing, temporal, spiritual and eternal, as the free gift of Jehovah, without any respect to their own works as the procuring cause.

THE verse chosen for our consideration at present exhibits the Redeemer under a character very similar and equally encouraging ; it represents him as *set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*.

CHRIST is here called a *propitiation*. There is in this passage a direct allusion to one of the most costly and instructive appurtenances of the Jewish temple. A covering of pure gold, called *the propitiation* or *mercy-seat*, was placed over the ark of the covenant ; and on this Jehovah appeared in the visible manifestations of his glory,

conversing with Israel his adopted people: From this propitiatory he gave the most luminous, satisfactory expressions of good will to them, and they in return were admitted to intimate communion with their God. Jehovah was therefore emphatically represented as dwelling between the cherubims, because one of them was placed at each end, overshadowing the mercy-seat of gold. In allusion to this the Son of God is pronounced, *our propitiation or mercy seat*: 'Through his mediation the Father is reconciled, and reconciles the world unto himself, not imputing to men their trespasses': In Jesus as on a throne of grace, he stands announcing peace on earth, and good will to all nations indiscriminately: If we cannot this day, like the Jewish worshippers formerly, behold with the natural eye the type, the literal *mercy-seat*, with the eye of faith we may contemplate in these emblems of bread and wine the infinitely glorious antitype; we may see the *word made flesh and dwelling among us*; wounded for our transgressions, making peace by the blood of his cross, and introducing everlasting righteousness for our complete acceptance; we may ascend in our contemplations, and penetrating within the vail, behold Jesus in all the glories of his exalted state, seated at the right hand of the heavenly majesty, answering all accusations, perfuming, with *much incense* of his intercession, the prayers of his people, and obtaining every blessing which they require: If we are

not priviledged with the Jewish worshiper to behold the *Schechina*, the cloud of glory, this visible pledge of Jehovah's presence, we may hear the still, small, soothing voice, *I am pacified towards you* ; " the sword of my justice, bathed in the blood of my SON your surety, now slumbers for ever ; I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters : " We may behold him as it were pointing to these elements and saying, *this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased* ; " through his cross I am everlastingly reconciled to you ; all the lightnings of my wrath which once played around, threatening your perdition, are now exhausted upon him ; for you there remains unclouded, eternal day. "

A PROPITIATION ^{THRU} *through faith*. Christ is a saviour only to such as actually apply him. The natural bread gives no nourishment to the body, which does not eat it, and except we really eat, that is receive it, the *living bread* imparts no life to the soul : A robe, however splendid in itself, cannot adorn the person who refuses putting it on, and *the garment of salvation* will not beautify in the sight of Jehovah, unless it be particularly applied ; the blood of the literal passover was sprinkled on the lintels of the door, as a mean of securing the Israelites from the sword of the destroying angel ; and unless the blood of our New Testament passover, of the lamb that was slain, be sprinkled upon the conscience it will

not purge from dead works, nor deliver from the wrath to come. The necessity of particularly applying Jesus and his salvation, is clearly taught in the scriptures, because an error in this is dangerous, yea, damning in its nature ; and I tremble to add, no error is probably more common in the visible church. Men occasionally read their bibles ; they attend ordinances ; they believe every doctrine that is delivered ; they yield a cold, speculative, unoperative assent to the truth that Jesus *died and rose again*, and then conclude that they are good christians. But do they reflect that *devils believe*, and yet perish ; and they may believe all that is revealed, and obey all that is required, and be lost for ever ?— *We must eat the flesh of the son of man ; we must put on his righteousness ; we must apply his healing balm ; we must live upon him as the very life of all our hopes ; we must glory in him as the alpha and omega of our pardon, and peace, and joy. This is that faith in his blood which the scriptures require : It is the commencement of heaven, the dawning of glory in the human heart. He who thus believeth in the son hath everlasting life, and shall not enter into condemnation.*

A PROPITIATION through faith in his blood. Although the soul in the act of believing views the saviour in all his offices ; although it receives him for wisdom, for righteousness, for sanctification, for redemption, yet in the first act of coming to

Jesus the sinner more immediately contemplates him in his priestly office ; he beholds the fiery law denouncing indignation against his crimes, and therefore endeavors to quench it with his expiatory blood ; he knows, like Adam, that he is spiritually *naked*, he is ashamed, he is afraid, and then eagerly embraces this celestial *robe*, this *raiment clean and white*, the surety's righteousness ; he sees a righteous God armed with vengeance, threatening his instant destruction, and then pleads the atonement of Calvary as the ground of his reconciliation. *One shall say in the Lord have I righteousness and strength ; I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord—That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is by the faith of Christ, even the righteousness of God by faith.* Bathed in this fountain of his blood, and covered with the garment of his salvation, the soul experiences an undisturbed repose, *a peace which passeth all understanding.*

WAVING any other remarks on the different members of this text, it is designed to shew that there was a peculiar agency of God the Father in the appointment of Messiah to his mediatorial work ; and in all that he has done, is now doing, or will perform hereafter in that capacity. *Him hath God set forth,*

1. By the immediate agency of God the Father, Messiah was solemnly set apart from eternity to this high undertaking. When the plan of human redemption first arose in the infinite mind, Jehovah is introduced as asking, *Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?* “What personage, throughout my vast dominions, is either able or inclined to embark in a work so awful and interesting? Who in the heavens above, or in the world which shall afterwards appear is capable by the underived, infinite dignity of his nature to bring glory to me in the recovery of man?” The Son, co-equal, and co-eternal with the Father, moved by love which only God could feel, instantly replies, “Here am I, send me: To my account let all the debt of all thy chosen be charged from this moment; mine be the bitterness and the joy, the reproach and glory of securing an eternal revenue of honor to thy crown in their redemption. Lo I come, in the volume of thy book, let it from this time be written of me, to do this thy will, O God.”—At that moment *the council was held between them both*, and the restoration of man determined. Had angels then existed, they must have clapped their wings, and shouted their loudest hosannas at the depth of divine condescension and mercy; they must speedily have veiled their faces with their wings, unable to behold the full blaze of that sovereignty, and justice, and wisdom and love, which mingled their glories in this scheme.

REFERING to that transaction, the redeemer declares, *I was set up from everlasting* ; “ I was ordained by Jehovah the surety of a better testament, and commissioned to appear in time for the accomplishment of that undertaking.” The adorable father, in his turn, frequently mentions this substitution of his son in the room of his chosen. *I have laid help upon one that is mighty ; I have exalted one chosen out of the people ; I have found David my servant ; with my holy oil have I anointed him : With whom my hand shall be established ; mine arm also shall strengthen him. Behold my servant whom I uphold ; mine elect, my chosen, my consecrated one, in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my spirit upon him ; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.* These characters can with no propriety be applied to the Son essentially considered ; he is in that sense the Father’s FELLOW ; he deems it not robbery to be EQUAL with God ; he claims, and claims without the least air of presumption, every title, every perfection, every glory that is proper to Jehovah ; but they belong to him peculiarly as contractor for man ; as mediator he is the Father’s servant ; he has voluntarily undertaken to perform all his pleasure by standing in our covenant-room.

2. By the immediate agency of God the Father, the Eternal Son entered our world, and assumed that nature in which he suffered and satis-

fied for human transgression. While Jehovah, in the original contrivance of our redemption, contemplated the ultimate object, his own glory in the happiness of his creatures, he also contemplated all the intermediate steps by which the mediator should accomplish this work ; and to these he actually ordained him. The incarnation of Jesus, or his assumption of our nature is therefore represented in scripture as the Father's act ; as done in direct submission to his authority. *When the fulness of the time was come*, when the moment, mutually agreed upon between the father and son, in their counsel from everlasting, had arrived, *God sent forth his son*, reminded him of his covenant stipulations, and sent him forth to enter upon the execution of his work, *made of a woman, made under the law ; to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* Wherefore when he the son cometh into the world he saith, he addresses his father as vindicating the honors of the godhead, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not,* “ the countless oblations which have been presented, and all the rivers of blood which have flowed in ages past thou hast rejected as insufficient for the expiation of human guilt ; *but a body hast thou prepared, framed, made ready for me.*” True it is, the manhood of Messiah was formed by the immediate, miraculous agency of the Holy Ghost, yet the spirit formed it, and the Son assumed in virtue of the Father's appoint-

ment. As the assumption of his body, so all the sufferings which he underwent either in body or soul, either from earth or from hell, were not barely with the permission, but by the direct appointment of the Father. *It pleased Jehovah to bruise him, he hath put him to grief*; he who in his sovereignty formerly made him to be sin for us, who laid the iniquity of his people on the head of this scape-goat, in his justice made him afterwards to suffer: with his own lips he utters the awful mandate, *awake O sword against my shepherd*, and with his own hand bathes this sword in the blood of his own son. True it is, a blind infernal rage roused the opposition of his enemies: Impelled by the alternate passions of envy and avarice and jealousy, one early commenced his persecutions, obliging the child Jesus to flee into Egypt; another betrayed him; another condemned him; others mocked and reviled him: But all this insult was offered, and all this suffering inflicted by the Father's appointment, and for the execution of his absolute eternal purpose. *Against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed*, says an inspired author, *both Herod and Pontius Pilate were gathered together; for to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done*. While these men were indulging an unprovoked, unhallowed rage, they were fulfilling the sovereign, everlasting decree of Jehovah; in filling up the measure of their own iniquity, they were filling up that cup which

the Father, myriads of ages before, had ordained him to drink.

3. By the immediate agency of God the Father, the Son as Mediator arose from the dead and ascended to his present elevation of glory in heaven. In pursuing our precious Lord through all the grades of his exaltation, from the humble tomb to the highest throne, we behold the authority of the Father illustriously expressed. By his appointment, and commissioned by the high court of heaven, the angel leaves his seat in bliss, visits the tomb, breaks off the seal, rolls back the stone, and welcomes to the region of day his conquered conquering Lord ; we hear the Son thus pathetically address the Father by the mouth of David his type, *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell*, the prison of the grave, this state of invisibility. “ Thy justice indeed required that I, as surety for man, should be seized and cast into prison, but justice now demands that when the debt is discharged the surety be liberated ; thou wilt shew me the path of life ; thou wilt make me full of joy with thy countenance.” When the risen Saviour had conversed with his apostles ; when he had, by frequent and familiar interviews, fully satisfied them that he was really risen from the dead, and had directed them as to the future management of his kingdom, by an immediate act of the Father Jehovah incarnate ascends on high, enters the gates of the celestial

sanctuary, and takes his seat on the right hand of the majesty on high. Then did his fervent prayer receive a literal answer, *Father glorify thou me with thine ownself ; with the glory which I had with thee before the world was ;* then did the ancient prophecy receive its full accomplishment, *the Lord said unto my lord ;* he who formerly spared not his own Son, who apparently delighted in his degradation and grief ; who doomed him to all the ignominy, and all the agonies of the manger and the garden and the cross, now delights to honor him ; takes him from prison and from judgment ; introduces him amidst a choir of adoring angels, to his presence, and assigns him the highest throne in his dominion ; *sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool ;* with his rod of iron this Jesus has already ground to powder the head of the old serpent, and his feet shall ere long tread on the neck of every opposer of his reign. Again, *God hath highly exalted him,* and what greater glory can be conferred on the Son, than he now participates ; the midst of the throne is his residence, the brightest crown in heaven adorns his head, and the sceptre of unlimited empire is put into his hand ; *and given him a name above every name ;* other exalted spirits are called *lords*, but the Son as Mediator is **LORD** of these lords ; others are called *kings*, but he is **KING** of kings ; others are dignified with the appellation of *Gods*, but the man Christ Jesus

is God over all ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven ; the tallest cherub that walks the streets of the heavenly city feels honored in doing honor to Jesus ; his glory consists in bending the knee, and laying all his glory at the feet of the Son ; the spirits of just men made perfect will, if possible, soar above the angels in expressions of humility and gratitude and praise ; and things on earth ; the church militant mingles her tribute of homage and thanksgiving with the church triumphant ; while believers exult in his righteousness they submit to his rule ; while they consider remission through his sacrifice their most exalted privilege, they consider obedience to his law their most incumbent, reasonable service ; and things under the earth, even hell is a part of the empire of this prince, and all its hopeless inhabitants are the reluctant subjects of his control. In his hand as Mediator the keys of hell and of death are now deposited ; impenitent souls are doomed to the bottomless pit, and infernal spirits, obtaining a momentary respite from their flames, ascend only at his permission ; and every tongue shall confess, while every knee is low in expressions of humility, every tongue is loud in ascriptions of praise, that Jesus Christ is Lord ; that he is justly invested with all power in heaven and earth ; that his throne is forever and ever, and his dominion from generation to generation ; and all is done to the glory of God the

Father ; in honoring the Son, they honor the Father whose image he bears, and at whose authority he sits enthroned ; in every act of adoration they recognise the Father's agency in thus highly exalting him, and the Father's command that all the saints, and *all the angels of God should worship him.*

4. IN the name, and by the appointment of the Father will Jesus descend at last to judge the world. It appears strictly proper, nay absolutely requisite that as the Son was made a public monument of scorn, of insult and suffering, his glory should be vindicated in a manner equally open, and by the same authority which had ordained his humiliation. Upon his ascension from mount Olivet, and his entrance into heaven his manifestation was only partial ; his glory darted around a few admiring apostles, and the host of attending angels ; myriads of the human family being absent were no spectators of the scene ; myriads of them were not yet in being, and could not attest it ; and no doubt the powers of darkness, whom he had lately driven from the field, and spoiled of their usurped dominion, retired from the unwelcome sight and endeavored to shut their eyes against the surrounding radiance. An exhibition of the Son as mediator more public, and with a blaze of glory more unclouded seems therefore both becoming and necessary ; and such an exhibition has the Father ordained

for him. *Behold he comes, and every eye shall see him ; he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels ; he who once prepared a loathsome manger now erects for him a throne, a great white throne, illuminating with its glory the whole creation of God : He who once delivered him to death, even the death of the cross now presents him with a crown, a crown infinitely surpassing in splendor all that ever adorned the head of a mortal : He who formerly refused a solitary ray of his countenance, leaving him to exclaim my God ! my God ! why hast thou forsaken me, now beams upon him with the most endearing, elevating smiles of his love, and announces in the hearing of assembled worlds, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased ; let all the hosts of God worship him ; he who formerly gave him up to cruel hands to be condemned, to be scourged, to be crucified, now commits to him all judgment. The Father loveth the Son and hath committed all judgment into his hand, he hath appointed a day, he who appointed the day when the glories of his divinity should be shrouded in Bethlehem's manger hath appointed another day when they shall burst forth to the admiration of the universe, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead. After the judgement is finished, after all the unbelieving are consigned to their own place, and the heirs of salvation are brought to*

inherit the kingdom prepared for them, the Father will everlastingly *set forth his Son* as an object of adoration and gratitude and love to the innumerable, extatic hosts of heaven : There collected in one vast assembly, and encircling one radiant throne, angels *elect*, and *elect ransomed* men will mingle their hearts and their voices in one unceasing, endless HALLELUIA, to him *that was once slain, but now sitteth on the throne even, to the Lamb forever and ever.*

THIS passage, thus imperfectly explained, affords,

1. A most refreshing, encouraging assurance of the Father's love ; of his cordial compassion to our misery, and most tender solicitude for our salvation. We are generally disposed to think that love to man dwells exclusively in the bosom of the Son ; we often paint in our imagination the Father as an object of terror ; we consider him in the character of an indignant judge, armed with vengeance against our transgressions, and utterly unwilling to pardon. But this is equally an uncomfortable and unbecoming view of Jehovah. Behold him, christian, from eternity, in his pure, unmerited, unasked, disinterested good will, proposing the restoration of man from the miseries of his apostacy ; behold him in the immensity of his grace ordaining *a Son, an only, beloved, begotten Son* your surety, by laying

down his life to obtain your redemption ; behold him executing without reserve upon Jesus your substitute, all that was denounced against you, and then art thou not ready to draw the animating conclusion, *God the Father is love ?* Art thou not constrained in extacy of wonder and joy to exclaim, *behold how he loved them ?* Can you utter, can you conceive ; can a seraph before the throne either utter, or imagine a more satisfactory evidence, a more astonishing expression of regard to man than is offered in the substitution of the Eternal Son ? Evangelists and apostles often introduced this subject in their discourses, but they wanted language to express its immensity ; they represented its height and depth as ineffable and inconceivable ; they admired and adored the display as beyond all comparison, as without any thing like a parallel in all the transactions of God. *He so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life.*—Be persuaded then, believer, from all these considerations, that *the Father himself loveth thee ;* learn to approach him through the infinite atonement, and all prevailing intercession of Jesus, as thy friend, thy Father, as not only *pacified* towards thee, but willing to do in thee and for thee, *abundantly more than thou art able to ask or receive.* *He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things ?* In bestowing the

greater mercy, his own Son, he has afforded an infallible pledge that the lesser shall not be withheld. Every blessing that can be hereafter communicated, must come infinitely short of the former : When he bestows earth and heaven, grace and glory, he only imparts a drop from this ocean, a ray from this sun.

2. WE are taught from this text the suitable exercise of our faith on this communion sabbath ; it is to contemplate and appropriate the Son of God as *set forth* in the ordinance of the supper. On ordinary occasions we are invited to behold him as presented in the promises of the gospel, and in the ministry of reconciliation ; there he is exhibited as *the wisdom of God, and the power of God, for our salvation* ; as the free, absolute, unconditional gift of the Father to a perishing world, and to us in particular : But on this great day of our New-Testament festival, we are favored with an exhibition of our precious Lord still more tender and affecting ; in the element of bread we behold Jehovah becoming incarnate, *the Son of God made in the likeness of sinful flesh* ; in the breaking of this bread we see the Saviour really suffering for our sins, cloven by the lightnings of his Father's wrath, and " bowing in agony his guiltless head : " In this wine we behold in symbol the surety's blood flowing at the hand of divine justice, and, as it rolls down, washing away the guilt of a chosen world : Sense may now

be employed as an handmaid to faith, and thro' these visible symbols our eyes may see, our ears hear, our hands handle, our mouths taste, and our souls participate the word of life. In these sacramental elements the Father is really *setting him forth* as the bread of life, the water of life, and the wine of everlasting consolation; he is reaching him out, communicant, for thine immediate reception and nourishment. He stands at the head of that table which his bounty has replenished, and with all the earnestness, the affection which divine love can inspire, he expostulates, *Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled: Eat, O friends, ye who have made a covenant with me by improving the sacrifice of my Son, who desire to approach me, adorned with his righteousness as your robe, and drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved.* Be not afraid then, weak, disconsolate communicant, to draw near this table of thy Father, and freely receive that spiritual food which is presented; *this flesh is meat indeed, this blood is drink indeed*, and thou art as welcome to partake as a reconciled, compassionate, bounteous God can make thee. *Love stronger than death*, love which tenderness to his own Son could not resist, love which none but Jehovah could exercise, moved him from eternity to provide this *Lamb for burnt-offering*, and moved by this same love he now offers him for thy nourishment and consolation. *Open thy mouth wide and he will fill it; he will satisfy thee*

with the goodness of his house, even of his holy temple.

3. WE may infer from this doctrine, the peculiar malignity of unbelief; of not embracing the ever blessed Jesus, as *set forth* in the gospel of peace; of all the crimes with which man either is, or can be chargeable this is inconceivably the most aggravated and exposes the pitiable subject to the most intolerable damnation. Other sins pour contempt on particular perfections of deity, but this pours contempt on all his perfections: it tramples under foot all that is sacred in his authority, all that is tender in his love, all that is awful in his wrath; other sins pour contempt on particular persons in Jehovah, but this pours the most deliberate, direct contempt on all the persons in Jehovah; it tramples under foot the body of the son which was broken, and his blood which flowed to redeem; it scorns the majesty of the Father who appointed him, and in whose name he appears; it gives the lie to the Holy Ghost who testifies that there is no salvation in any other; in short, unbelief spurns the highest conceivable, the highest possible exercise of love, of compassion, of condescension, of long-suffering, of sovereignty which men or angels ever have witnessed, or which to all eternity they ever shall witness. I mention it again, and O that the living, life-giving SPIRIT with his resistless energies may bear the truth to the

conscience and the heart of every gospel despiser, of all the crimes with which man is or can be chargable the rejection of precious, precious Christ is the most aggravated, and exposes to a degree of torment the most exquisite and intolerable. Shall I go further? There is a colouring of malignity in this offence with which even the prince of darkness can never be charged. It is acknowledged that he violated a law most righteous and reasonable in its requirements; a law which it was equally his interest and duty, and glory to obey; he rebelled against his rightful, benificent sovereign, and united in his train multitudes of the heavenly peers, but he never slighted such love, he never spurned such long-suffering, he never abused such patience, he never despised such exceeding, abundant grace, he never rejected such tender, repeated expostulations, he never turned his back on the gates of glory set open for his admission, he never rushed with such deliberate hardihood into the flames of hell kindled by his crimes. *If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now, under the gospel light so clear, under expressions of love so astonishing, under offers of mercy so frequent and fervent, now they have no cloak, no apology, for their sin.*

BRETHREN, are these hard sayings? The Lord God of Gods is my witness that I utter them in the most pure, the most fervid love; I have en-

larged upon them from an overflowing zeal for your everlasting welfare: Have I painted, although with infinite imperfection, the horrors of the wrath to come, it is only that I may be instrumental in awakening you to flee from that wrath; I have pointed out the guilt, the aggravated guilt of neglecting this *great salvation* as a mean of rousing you to WALK in the light while it is yet shining around you, and to improve the remedy while its offer is continued. The blood of Jesus upon the head is the greatest possible curse, the blood of Jesus upon the conscience is the greatest possible blessing, and it yet flows freely, flows plenteously for your redemption; In God's name I proclaim that here is pardon for the most guilty, a laver that instantly, utterly, everlastingly washes away the foulest stain of human transgression; only apply it, sinner, by a particular, appropriating faith, and though *your sins be as scarlet, they shall become white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.* Him is the Father *setting forth* this hour, in this assembly, as a propitiation through faith in his blood: *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so is the son of man lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him; that whosoever believeth; here, man, woman, here is thy warrant for putting in thy plea, a warrant drawn up in the high court of heaven, signed and sealed by each person in Jehovah: If any are excepted, they themselves make the excep-*

tion, for the Lord God proclaims aloud, if *ANY man thirst, let him come to me and drink ; WHO-SOEVER will let him take of the water of life freely* : If any be excluded they are self-excluded, for the Lord God declares and pledges all the glories of his throne for the truth of the declaration, *I have no pleasure in your death, but would that you turn from your wicked ways, and live ; him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ; Let him turn to the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God for he will abundantly pardon* : That whosoever believeth in him, might not perish, but have **ETERNAL LIFE**. This is certainly, infallibly the privilege of every sinner who exercises faith in the Saviour's blood. The gospel with its great and precious promises ; the covenant with its boundless, endless blessings ; heaven with its ineffable immunities and glories, at the moment of his closing with Jesus, become his ; they are his by real, unalienable title now ; they will be his in full, actual possession for ever.

WILLINGLY would I persevere, enumerating these proclamations of divine mercy ; willingly would I extol more largely the infinite efficacy of Calvary's blood for the redemption of sinners the very chief ; willingly would I multiply arguments, expostulating with all who are present, to improve it for their redemption in particular ; but I must now direct your attention to the more solemn and interesting services of the day. We

have been contemplating the Son of God *set forth* in the word of reconciliation ; let us now behold him in the symbols of his body and blood as *crucified for us* ; and while our eyes see, and our mouths are tasting this word of life, may our hearts overflow with his abundant consolations : May we experience an earnest of that more glorious hour when we, redeemed by his blood, arrayed with the spotless robe of his righteousness, and shining in the beauties of holiness, *shall eat and drink with him at his table in his heavenly kingdom* : Then, beloved sisters and brethren in Christ, we shall *hunger no more, neither thirst any more* ; no recollection of guilt shall ruffle the peace of our consciences ; no intervening cloud shall cast its unwelcome shade over our understandings, or chill the ardour of our affections ; nothing within, nothing without shall embitter the joys of our hearts : *For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and lead us unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes.* Come Lord Jesus, come quickly ; come in the more abundant, refreshing showers of thy grace ; hasten in thine own time the **RISING** of the day-star of glory. AMEN.

Sermon VIII.

*The Sovereign Agency of God in determining the
Heirs of Salvation.*



I. PETER, I. 2.

ELECT ACCORDING TO THE FORE-KNOWLEDGE
OF GOD THE FATHER.

THE absolute sovereignty of God in the disposal of his creatures is a doctrine mysterious and awful. But although it is utterly unfathomable by our finite, depraved understandings, it is taught clearly and unquestionably in that revelation of his will which he has given our world. There he is represented as the great, adorable Supreme, who *gives no account of his matters*; who makes his own pleasure the rule, and his own glory the end of all his transactions towards angels and men; as having every occurrence relating to them, whether more minute or more important, under his immediate control, directed by his omnipotent power, and rendered subservient to the accomplishment of his counsels from eternity. *The Lord reigneth: The Lord sitteth upon the floods, yea, the Lord sitteth king forever. Of him, and through him, are all things, to whom be glory forever.* In his transactions towards the angels Jehovah appears adorably so-

vereign, and awfully just ; in the depths of his sovereignty he confirmed a part of them unalterably in bliss, electing, ordaining them infallibly to persevere in holiness, and happiness ; in the searchless depths of the same sovereignty he permitted a part of them to apostatize, and in the rigors of his justice erected them monuments of eternal vengeance. In his transactions to man he appears mysteriously sovereign, and exceedingly, abundantly gracious. In his sovereignty he appoints Adam the Federal representative of mankind, embarks on his free will their temporal and eternal destinies, and by permitting him to fall suffers them to be plunged in ruin irrecoverable ; in the riches of his unmerited, marvelous grace he elects a portion of our apostate family to salvation ; gives them to his own son freely undertaking in their behalf, and through him as their covenant head, ordains them to all the privileges of grace and glory. They are *elect*, says our apostle, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.*

YOUR attention was lately directed to the agency of Jehovah the Father in the appointment of Jesus to his mediatorial work ; we endeavored to confirm from scripture the important and the comfortable doctrine that all the sufferings which were endured by him on earth, his present exaltation in our nature and name in heaven, together with his final appearance at the consum-

mation of all things, were all in direct conformity to that eternal transaction. That same sovereign grace which was exercised in ordaining Christ the surety early displayed its prerogatives in determining the heirs of his salvation; in giving him by name and surname many sons and daughters who should everlastingly participate his covenant blessings. The prospect of their salvation was, next to his Father's glory, the chief source of his exultation and joy from eternity past, and in them and over them he will rejoice through eternity to come as an ample reward for all the humiliation of Bethlehem, and all the agonies of Calvary. When the election of man is ascribed to God the Father, we are not to consider the other ever-blessed persons in Jehovah as excluded. There was no doubt a mutual consultation, and the most perfect harmony among the adorable three in this transaction. The son who had covenanted to make the purchase, and the spirit who had engaged to apply this salvation were concerned in determining the persons and the number to be chosen no less than the Father who had proposed the plan. Yet this act is pre-eminently ascribed to the Father as the first person in the God-head, and as having consecrated Jesus to his mediatorial undertaking; he who proposes the work, also stipulates the reward. He who appoints the surety to *make his soul an offering for sin*, absolutely promises him a numerous, spiritual offs-

pring, in whom *he should see the travail of his soul and be satisfied. It becomes him of whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory to make the captain of our salvation perfect through suffering.*

PERHAPS there is not a doctrine in all the christian system which the common adversary of souls has more malignantly opposed, or more artfully abused than the one which I am now attempting to vindicate. The ungodly he has endeavored to embolden in sin by suggesting that their state was unalterably determined; that *the purpose of God according to election must stand*, and therefore they might reasonably live as they list; and thus enjoy at least the present life, lest they were not appointed to happiness in the next. To the soul awakened with apprehensions of wrath, and anxiously enquiring after the refuge, he has represented this decree as an insurmountable obstacle; he has artfully insinuated that *few are chosen*; that very probably they were not included in the number, and therefore the redemption of the cross was never designed for them, nor can ever be enjoyed by them. Thus the latter this arch-deceiver attempts driving to despair by the same doctrine which to the other he holds forth as an argument for presumption. Relying therefore with profound humility on the Holy Ghost for direction, and taking his word as my only guide, I shall aim at illustrating this doc-

trine with all possible caution and scriptural simplicity.

THE word *elect* properly signifies chosen out of, selected, or separated from among. This term is sometimes applied to a part of the angels, and expresses their confirmation in their primitive integrity; they were not *chosen* to be redeemed from sin, because they never had transgressed; but they were elected to be kept from apostatizing, and to be established in that holiness and happiness which they originally possessed. But this epithet, when applied to man, is much more comprehensive. He was permitted to fall, and elected to be recovered from the complicated ruins of his fall; to be redeemed from all the guilt, the pollution, the wretchedness of his depraved state, and promoted to a higher degree of glory and bliss than he had lost by transgression.

THE election of a part of the human family to eternal life is taught so positively and repeatedly in the living oracles that it appears inconsistent to profess a belief of them, and reject this doctrine. In order to exhibit this important mystery of our religion with evidence too strong to be resisted, evangelists and apostles have announced it in a variety of expressions and have often repeated the same expressions. They thus represent the heirs of glory as *elected according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father*; *chosen to*

salvation ; chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world ; ordained to eternal life : afore prepared to glory ; predestinated to the adoption of Children ; predestinated to be conformed to the image of his son ; predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. The whole body of the redeemed are emphatically called *the election of grace ; the election of God* : God is the author, and free grace exclusively the moving cause of this sovereign act. An inspired historian in relating the success of the gospel asserts that *as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* This passage of the holy apostle is peculiarly instructive, and independent of any other appears sufficient to establish the doctrine of a personal election. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed ;* all, in that particular region who had been chosen from eternity, were then called effectually ; the gospel dispensed by Paul and Barnabas had *free course and was glorified* in THEIR conversion, but in the conversion of no others ; the application of the word of life by God the spirit was precisely co-extensive with the everlasting purpose of God the Father. Equally instructive, and pertinent for the confirmation of this divine truth is that declaration of Paul in his second epistle to Timothy his son, *I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory ;* the apostle knew that there was

an election of grace among all nations ; he knew that they must be savingly called in time and that the ministry of reconciliation was a principal mean of their vocation ; he knew that the absoluteness of the divine decree by no means excluded human instrumentality, but in the unfathomable counsels of Jehovah the means and the end were as really connected, as if no decree was existing ; for the sake of the chosen few he endured all things, he travelled through different countries, he submitted to various afflictions arising from fatigue, and poverty and reproach and persecution.

WITH respect to this election the following observations may be made.

1. It was eternal. *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, saith Jehovah, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.* Many, who oppose what are usually termed the doctrines of grace, acknowledge our election of God, but deny that this act was passed from eternity : they argue that the choice of a sinner depends on something to be done by himself ; they maintain that he must first repent and turn to righteousness and then he is chosen of God. But their system is in direct opposition to that of the apostle. He pronounces them chosen in Christ Jesus *before the foundation of the world* ; he congratulates the faithful in the church of Thessaloni-

ca as having been *from the beginning chosen to salvation* : in hopes, he states in another epistle, *in hopes of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised in Christ Jesus before the world began*. Here they are represented as chosen before the *foundation of the world* and before *the world began* ; and what in the ordinary acceptation of words, is the meaning of these passages ? Surely if they prove any thing, they prove that their salvation for eternity to come was decreed before they existed ; before the world was founded and consequently from eternity past. This same apostle again declares that they were *saved and called with an holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace given them in Christ Jesus before the world began*. The righteous are here represented as saved and called in time because the divine purpose had so ordained it from eternity ; that grace was given them in Christ Jesus before the world began, and therefore as he was everlastingly elected to be the living head, they were everlastingly elected to constitute the members of this head.

2. This election was free, absolutely, unconditionally free. In this gracious, adorable deed Jehovah was not influenced by any excellence in the creature, because they possessed no excellence to invite his attention, or merit his favor : *he loved them, because he loved them* ; he made choice of one man to grace in time, and

glory through eternity, merely because such was *the good pleasure of his will*. All men were involved in the same sentence of condemnation ; all were equally corrupted in every part ; without help or hope ; they had not even an inclination to be restored, much less the ability of effecting their own restoration. He who denies this position gives deliberately the lie to the Holy Ghost, because he has proclaimed it in words which *he who runs may read*, and by the lips of all his apostles and prophets since the world began. *There is none that seeketh after God*, is their individual and united testimony, *they are together become unprofitable : there is none that doeth good, no, not one*. Here is the triple testimony of eternal truth, and he who doubts or disbelieves, cannot doubt or disbelieve through want of evidence. Seeing then all are equally guilty, equally devoid of will, or power to perform what is spiritually good, if they are made to differ, this difference must originate in the good pleasure of God, not in themselves. It is impossible that foreseen excellence could be the moving cause of this choice, when the objects of it are altogether *UNCLEAN ; deceitful above all things and desperately wicked* ; nor foreseen faith when there is *an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God* ; nor foreseen love when the *mind is enmity against him*. But what says our sovereign, electing Father ? *I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compas-*

sion on whom I will have compassion. What says one who is justly ranked among the deepest debtors to free discriminating grace? *Not of works, lest any man should boast.* Surely if works foreseen, or already performed were the foundation of this choice boasting would be reasonable; conscious of pre-eminent excellence she might lift up her voice, and command all others to *stand by, being holier than they*; but now her mouth is closed in everlasting silence, for the apostle adds, *it is neither of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.* It was grace the most marvellous which moved that any should be chosen; it was sovereignty the most adorable which pointed out the objects of this choice. *They were predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the council of his own will; that they should be to the praise of his glory.*

3. THIS purpose of election is unalterable. Having loved them without beginning, the Lord God loves them without end. We can conceive no reason either in Jehovah or the creature, why this decree, once formed, should afterwards be reversed. Nothing unforeseen by him can possibly occur throughout his vast dominion requiring a change of procedure. He knew intuitively what scheme would be most proper for supporting the majesty of his law, and advancing the glory of his perfections, without wait-

ing to deliberate with himself, or consult with his creatures ; he foresaw as perfectly before the objects of his love were chosen, every thing in them which might lead to an alteration, as after they exist and act : all the impiety and blasphemy by which many of them are debased before their conversion, and all the discontent, the ingratitude, the shameful unbelief and enmity with which through the desperate wickedness of their hearts they are chargeable after conversion were as obvious to his view when he enrolled their names in his volume, as when they actually commit these offences in their respective generations. If this foreseen unworthiness did not prevent him from making the choice, why should it induce him to reject them when chosen ? If the whole plan of the building was completely under his eye from eternity ; if he determined the place which every stone should occupy, and in his sovereign decree erected it in that place, can we imagine that he would afterwards demolish what he had formerly arranged ? Reverence for the glory of his wisdom, and truth obliges us secretly to abhor the supposition ; respect for the most plain and frequent representations of his word constrains us openly to renounce it. This immutability in all his purposes the Lord God again and again challenges as an essential, unalienable prerogative of his being. *I am the Lord, I change not : I am God, and there is none else : I am God there is none like me ; my counsel*

shall stand and I will do all my pleasure. The apostle, contemplating this attribute of Deity, indulges the animated exclamation, *In hopes of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.* HE CANNOT LIE, asserts this noble advocate for truth, infallibly taught by the spirit of all truth ; “ he might as readily cease to be God as cease to be immutable, or fail to execute what his soul has purposed and his mouth spoken or promised : His plans like himself are *the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever.*”

4. This election of man was exclusively through Christ as Mediator. The justice and holiness of Jehovah could acquiesce in the appointment of any to salvation only in a consistency with their respective honors, and in a manner that secured satisfaction to their respective claims. *As without shedding of blood there can be no remission in time, so without an immediate respect to that atonement there could be no appointment to this remission from eternity.* The Lord God in decreeing to display the riches of his mercy by restoring a portion of our revolting family must necessarily decree to vindicate his law from the injury which it should sustain by our transgressions, and recommend it to the esteem of all rational spectators ; he therefore ordained them to glory in the prospect of that perfect, vicarious atonement which his Son, un-

dertaking for us, should afterwards accomplish ; he as really contemplated the redemption of Calvary when he was filling up *the book of life* with the names of his chosen, as when he now passes in their favour the sentence of adoption, and reconciliation, or when he communicates any blessing whether temporal or spiritual. They were chosen *in Christ Jesus* ; They were predestinated to the adoption of children *by or thro' Jesus Christ* to himself. A union the most intimate, and indissoluble was constituted between him, and them in *the council of peace*, and their names were registered beneath his name in the volume of heaven. When he was appointed HEAD, they were chosen members to make up the body, and constitute *the fulness of him, that filleth all in all* : When he was appointed the FOUNDATION, they were selected as stones to be polished by the Divine Spirit, and reared up for completing the building of mercy : When he was raised up as *the plant of renown, as the living vine* ; they were set apart as branches to be engrafted into this vine, and through the constant, abundant supply of his influences to *bring forth the fruits of righteousness*. Again, they are represented as *blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus* ; although thousands of them are yet unborn, and of them who are in being many remain as yet strangers to the covenant, yet in Jesus their representing head they participate all spiritual and

immortal blessings; grace was actually given him for them, and in their own order they shall become *complete in him who is the head of all principalities and power.*

THESE remarks on the doctrine of election lead us to consider.

2. To what they were ordained of God.

1. THEY were chosen to the actual participation of grace in time. The want of due attention to this truth is probably a principal reason why many have staggered at this doctrine, and others have openly opposed it. They look upon this decree as wasting its objects to heaven independently of any other consideration; they take not into view *the strait gate* of conversion at which they must enter, and *the narrow way of sanctification* by which they must necessarily travel in order to reach the regions of bliss: This is a very great mistake. They are as absolutely appointed to holiness, as to happiness; and without the former they can never attain the latter. Without an effectual change by divine grace the sinner is equally unworthy of the kingdom, and unfit for the communion of God. He whose affections are *earthly, and sensual, and devilish*, could find no entertainment in the pure, spiritual joys of heaven: he who has no delight in the company and conversation of the righte-

ous and to whom all the ordinances of religion are insupportably tedious would be more than miserable in that world where all their society is holy, and their only employment is praise. But as a change is indispensably requisite, the decree ordaining them to glory infallibly secures this change. *It is the will of God, his eternal, unalterable purpose, even their sanctification. They were from the beginning chosen to salvation through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth.* Salvation is the ultimate object to which the decree had respect, and sanctification by the spirit, and belief of the truth are the means by which this end is attained. The Holy Ghost Jehovah is the great agent, and the scriptures of truth, the chief instrument of effecting their conversion, their holiness, their consolation and preparing them for that kingdom which *their father had prepared for them from eternity.* They are denominated not only *a chosen, elected, generation,* but also *an holy nation, a peculiar people that they may shew forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into this marvellous light.* The tree must first bud and blossom in the nursery upon earth, before it is transplanted into the paradise in heaven : The Lord God, as a wise master builder, polishes with his grace those stones which he designs to rear on his building of glory.

2. THEY are elected to eternal life as the end.

*God hath not appointed us to wrath but to obtain salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ. This, as I formerly noticed, was the ultimate object contemplated by Jehovah with respect to his chosen. While his all comprehensive eye looked through the intermediate steps of their apostacy in Adam, of their actual union to the person of his Son, of their remission through his blood, of their acceptance through his righteousness, of their regeneration by his spirit, of their complete sanctification by the occasional supplies of his grace, it also embraced in its plan their endless residence, and glory in his presence. All these are only different links in one great chain connected intimately and inseparably in the purpose of God. Did he ordain them to life in his sovereign everlasting decree, he fulfils this decree by giving them *grace* in time, and this grace he will infallibly crown with *glory* hereafter. This is the order established in the living unerring oracles ; *whom he did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son ; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called ; and whom he called, them he also justified ; and whom he justified them he also glorified.* Such is the connection intimated by our enthroned redeemer in his intercession at the mercy-seat above. *Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me ; for thou hast loved me before the foundation of the world.**

1. THIS doctrine affords a rich and glorious display of divine compassion, and love. The election of a single sinner to the kingdom of heaven, and his introduction to that kingdom by a price so amazing as the death of the Lord of glory must have excited the admiration of angels : He must have stood for ever an illustrious monument to the praise of the riches of divine mercy. Although millions of the human kind, countless as the stars of heaven, had been doomed to expiate their guilt with their own blood, yet the consideration that ten thousand, thousand talents had been forgiven him, forgiven him *freely* without the least claim on his part, must have filled him and all holy intelligences with endless astonishment. The remission of one sin committed against the Eternal God is a more transcendent exercise of forbearance than if a prince on the throne should pardon a million of subjects who had forfeited their lives ; because there is no comparison between the honors of an earthly monarch, and the majesty of almighty God.—When we reflect therefore that not barely one sinner is chosen, but a *multitude ; a great multitude which no man can number ; a great multitude which no man can number out of every nation and tribe and people and language*, how do our conceptions of divine compassion expand ?—Transported with emotions of gratitude and wonder, we are obliged to exclaim, *What hath Jehovah wrought ? O that men would praise the*

Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. With respect to those whom his sovereignty has passed by, it becomes us to acquiesce in the submissive strains of the apostle, *What if God willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known, hath borne with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction?* Even to these he imparts innumerable blessings in the present life : He permits them to walk on his earth ; to breathe in his air ; to enjoy the light of his sun ; he gives them rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, and thus crowns them with numerous marks of his loving kindness, all which they had forfeited by their fall : He gives them a clear dispensation of his word ; he affords them the common operations of his spirit ; he offers them everlasting redemption through his son, and spares many of them ten, or twenty, or thirty, or forty years, *befeeching them to be reconciled.* If he finally permits them to perish in their unbelief, and excludes them from his gracious presence, there is no room for the presumptuous challenge, *What dost thou,* or for the more daring assertion, *the ways of the Lord are not equal.* Ought we not rather to mingle in the devout ascription of the spirits before the throne, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty ; Just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints ?* Or in the humble, yet ardent and elevated language of the great apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and*

knowledge of God ; how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways are past finding out : For who hath known the mind of the Lord ; what finite understanding is capable of exploring the fathomless profound of his purposes, or tracing him through the immensity of his operations ? Or who hath been his counsellor ; what cherub, or seraph, however enlarged their comprehension, or intimate their communion with Jehovah, dare to intrude an advice relative to the government of his creatures ? For of him, and through him, and to him are all things ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

2. LET all be admonished from this doctrine to aim *at making their calling and election sure.* This exhortation is frequently given by the apostles of our Lord, and our compliance with it is a part infinitely wiser than to be disputing against the sovereignty of the divine decrees. Were men as industrious in improving the promises, and that everlasting remedy which is presented in the promises as they are in raising objections against particular truths of christianity, it would conduce much more to their peace in this world, and their felicity and honor in the next. If a doctrine is mysterious, or to their false ideas of propriety appears unreasonable, many consider it a sufficient reason for neglecting religion altogether ; they resolve not to perplex themselves about things which they are unable to comprehend ;

conscience drops asleep, and they continue in their transgressions without remorse, and without anxiety : But this is a resolution both impious and dangerous in the extreme. Must not that be true which Jehovah has declared, although my limited depraved understanding does not fully conceive it ; must not that be right which he has determined, although his counsels may be unsearchable ? *Shall mortal man be more just than God ? Shall a man be more pure than his maker ?* Dost thou love thy soul, proud man, lay aside thy carnal reasoning, and make sure thy salvation in the way which divine mercy has prescribed. Be not discouraged from the consideration that *few are chosen*, because thou dost not know ; an angel in heaven does not know but thy name is now *written in the Lamb's book of life* ; and in this glorious gospel thou hast every encouragement which thy soul can possibly desire. Here are *riches for the poor, light for the blind, liberty for the lawful captive, a robe for the naked, rest for the weary, strength for the weak, and healing for every spiritual disease*.—Art thou secretly objecting, “ I know not whether I was *chosen in Christ Jesus*, and therefore am not certain that these blessings were designed for me.” Art thou a sinner of the human family, a son or daughter of Adam, for thee a full salvation is provided ; to thee this salvation is *freely, freely* offered, and this offer is an ample warrant for thee to accept. None were ever in-

vited as persons *predestinated* to life, but they are invited as *guilty* to come for *pardon* ; as *polluted* to come for *sanctification* ; as *slaves of corruption*, and *heirs of wrath* to come for *redemption* ; as *diseased* to apply for *healing* ; as *lost* to come for *recovery* ; as *aliens* to seek the *adoption of sons* ; as *poor* to accept of *everlasting riches* ; and as *miserable* to ask *mercy* of the Lord.—None were ever condemned as persons *passed by*, but as refusing that remedy which the promise exhibits. The evangelist does not assert, *He* whose name is wanting in the records of life, but *he that believeth not is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth upon him*. The apostle does not ask, *How shall ye escape*, not being ordained to eternal life, but *how shall ye escape if ye neglect so great salvation* ? It is not declared, he that being omitted in the secret purposes of God, but *he that being often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and that without remedy*. No sinner was ever rejected that sought mercy of the Lord with humility and self-denial and perseverance : *He will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer*. Be encouraged therefore to wait on Jehovah in every ordinance of his appointment ; wait upon him with all patience and perseverance : Meditate frequently on thy wants and the all-sufficiency of Jesus ; on thine unworthiness, and the freedom, the infinite freedom of his covenant- blessings ; on thy guilt and the ever-

lasting efficacy of his sacrifice for thy remission. Art thou still in awful anxiety about the decree of election and afraid that thou art not included in the number ; remember that *the Father sent his Son to be the saviour of the world*, endeavor then to embrace him in the arms of faith as thy *saviour* ; *he is made of God*, clearly exhibited, unconditionally offered to sinners without exception for *wisdom*, for *righteousness*, for *sanctification*, for *redemption* ; aim at embracing him as thine own *wisdom*, thine own *righteousness*, thine own *sanctification*, thine own *redemption* ; and be assured, thou shalt not seek in vain. *With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*

3. THIS doctrine is a perennial, everlasting source of admiration and joy to each believer in Jesus Christ. Every lively exercise of grace ; all the actings of thy faith, thy love, thy repentance ; all thine ardent desires after greater conformity to God, and thy longings for more intimate communion with him are to thee, christian, satisfactory reviving proofs that thou wast *chosen to salvation*. Thy calling now is merely the counter-part of thine election from eternity. *He that hath wrought thee for this self some thing is God the Holy Ghost*, and he hath thus wrought, because on thee the Father's love centered from everlasting. *He hath saved and called thee with an holy calling, not according to thy*

works, but according to his own purpose and grace given thee in Christ Jesus before the world began. Does not the very thought fill thee with surprise and astonishment unutterable at the sovereign goodness of Jehovah? That when the names of many *wise men, and mighty and noble* are probably omitted, thy worthless name is selected and carefully enrolled in the records of life; that one so poor, abjectly poor as thou art should be predestinated to an inheritance inconceivably great, an inheritance incorruptible, and eternal in the heavens; that one so impure, so deformed as thou art should be clothed with change of raiment, a *garment of wrought gold*, splendid and perfect as the infinite surety could prepare; that one whose habitation is in the dust; who art destitute perhaps of a shelter from the scorching heat or the wintry blasts should be chosen to a house not made with hands, a mansion above the skies more costly than angels occupy; that one, who is now slighted or despised as insignificant, and contemptible, is destined to shine as a star or a sun in the kingdom of God? Surely thine heart should be all gratitude, thy lips all praise, and thy life one constant, ardent course of obedience to HIM who hath loved thee with an everlasting love. And, O christian, all the mercy manifested in thine election, thy vocation, thy consolation through the occasional assurances of thy Father's love is the certain earnest of every possible blessing through eternity to come.

Being *predestinated*, thou art already *called* ; being *called* thou art completely *justified* ; and being *justified* thou wilt certainly and shortly be *glorified*. As every comfortable persuasion that Jesus is thine is a counterpart to thine election *before the world began*, it is also the first fruits of a full harvest of blessings when this world with all its toys shall forever have an end. Then with thine understanding inconceivably enlarged, and a voice improved and elevated beyond what thou canst now imagine thou shalt sing of the mercies of Jehovah forever ; thou shalt trace all the streams which occasionally refresh thee on earth, and those rivers of consolation which uninterruptedly overflow thy soul in heaven to ELECTING LOVE as the spontaneous, unexhausted, everlasting spring.—AMEN. So let it be ; so it shall be to the glory of free grace, and thine eternal rejoicing.

Sermon IX.

*The Condescension of the Eternal Son in becoming
our surety.*



2 COR. viii. 9.

FOR YE KNOW THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS
CHRIST, THAT THOUGH HE WAS RICH, YET FOR
YOUR SAKES HE BECAME POOR.

ALL those discords which distract the
counsels, and enfeeble the efforts of mortals, whe-
ther in matters civil or sacred, may be traced to
human imperfection as their source. A partial
blindness clouds the understanding of the most
enlightened ; measures therefore which appear
eligible to one man, to another seem inexpedient
or impracticable : The demon of jealousy finds
admission into the bosom of the most disinterest-
ed, and leads them coldly to receive, or decided-
ly to oppose plans which they secretly approve ;
they are afraid that the execution of the scheme
might raise an inferior nearer to a level, or give
compleat ascendancy to a rival : But in propor-
tion as the understanding expands promptly to
discern the fitness of things, and the heart is im-
proved cordially to embrace what is excellent,
union of sentiment will adorn their deliberation.

and their strength will be directed to one point for the execution of every measure, whether more limited, or more extensive in its tendency. *They will see eye to eye ; they will co-operate hand in hand, and with the voice they will sing together.* Among the INFINITE THREE, who are perfection itself, harmony sublime, uninterrupted everlastingly reigns : What either divine person wills, all the divine persons will : As their essence is one, their plans and operations are necessarily one. Although in the economy of human salvation each assumes a distinct office, yet he assumes and executes this office in perfect concurrence and co-operation with the others.— While the everlasting Father *saves not his own son*, but delivers him up to redeem, the son *saves not himself*, but cordially *gives his life a ransom for many.* *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor.*

THE apostle makes a direct appeal to these Corinthian converts, *Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus.* He did not mean that they fully comprehended this mystery in all its vast extent, because it is utterly incomprehensible by any created mind, whether human or angelic ; it is an ocean without bottom, which can never be fathomed ; an ocean without bounds which cannot possibly be measured. But they knew it doctrinally in their heads ; this grace had often

been announced and extolled among them by the apostles of our Lord: These inspired preachers of righteousness had *determined to know nothing* in that, or any other church, *but Jesus Christ and him crucified*; they had exhibited the infinite redeemer in the height of his elevation as God, and the depth of his degradation as man, to be the chiefest of the ways of God; to be the greatest mystery of wisdom and condescension that was ever displayed: These Corinthians knew him experimentally and savingly in their hearts; they had received not merely the teaching of apostles, but an *unction of the holy One, by which they knew all things*: This all-mighty, all-gracious agent had enlightened *the eyes of their understandings to know what was the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints*: This latter teaching is infinitely the most important and effectual; it enlightens the mind; it purifies the heart; it spiritualizes the affections; it regulates the conversation, and finally saves the soul.

IN the discussion of these words, we are led to consider, 1. The original, underived glory of Christ, *he was rich*: 2. His subsequent abasement, and humiliation, *he became poor*; and 3. The condescension manifested in that transaction, expressed by the term *grace*.

THE original condition and glory of Jesus

first demand our consideration. *He was rich.* It is common to pronounce the man *rich* who has large possessions, accumulated treasures, and a numerous train of attendants, subject to his authority, and ready to execute his commands. This phrase, however, when applied to Jehovah, contains a meaning which no language can express. Do we speak of possessions, *the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof* ; do we talk of treasures, *the silver and the gold* he claims as his own ; do we speak of attendants, *the world is his, and they that dwell therein* ; add to the inhabitants of our earth those exalted spirits which surround his throne above : *They are all ministering* servants to Him their Creator and Lord ; they ever wait ready to spread their wings, and fly as instruments of blessing to his chosen, or indignation to his adversaries. There is one sense in which the term *rich* as applied to God is essentially different from, and infinitely transcends its meaning when applied to mortals. He is capable of constantly adding to his treasures ; he can easily enlarge his possessions by creating other worlds, and other worlds at his pleasure ; he can multiply his ministering hosts by forming other spirits bodied or unembodied, and thus be ever adding to his revenue of wealth and of glory : He has only to speak the word, and new heavens and new earths would instantly appear ; *greater lights* would arise to rule *the day*, and *lesser lights* to rule *the night*.

JESUS, the Son of God, is *rich* in the fullest latitude of the expression. He possesses a Being and blessedness uncommunicated from any other, and independent of any other : Every excellence, and perfection of the Deity reside essentially, and eternally in our Lord Jesus Christ : All the names, all the attributes, all the works, all the worship which are ascribed in scripture to the everlasting Father, are ascribed with equal emphasis, with equal propriety to the eternal Son. He is frequently called God, and to prove that this does not express barely the excellence of his office, but the divinity of his nature, he is called *God over all, blessed for ever* : His blessedness had no beginning, and it shall never have an end : He is called *the Lord of glory*, as embracing all that is excellent, and to shew that this title is unalienable, it was applied to him in the lowest depths of his humiliation. *Him none of the princes of this world knew, for if they had known him, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* He is explicitly pronounced, *equal with God, Jehovah's fellow*, and to prove that this honor was not presumptuously arrogated, it is immediately applied to him by his adorable Father. *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and smite the man that is my FELLOW.* As every divine name and title, so each divine work is ascribed indiscriminately to the Son and the Father. Creation is a peculiar, I might add, an incommunicable prerogative of Deity. Men and an-

gels may alter matter which already exists, but they cannot possibly give existence to matter : their united wisdom and power could not form one ray of light, one drop of water, one particle of dust, much less give being to the least insect which moves upon the earth. But of the Son it is said, *By him all things were created*, and to excite more elevated conceptions of his dignity, it is added, *that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible ; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers ; all things were created by him and for him ;* and to instruct us that his work did not terminate then, the apostle further adds, *by him all things consist, or stand together ;* his arm divine, which gave them existence, gives them support ; preserves them in the sphere appointed for them whether in the material or immaterial world.

EVERY mark of honor and every expression of homage which are due to Jehovah are offered to Jesus. The redeemed from among men often prostrated their bodies before him on the earth, and they now *cast their crowns at his feet* in heaven ; angels unite in offering their devotions to the son : they cannot indeed adore him as *their* redeemer, but they adore him as their creator, their Lord, their benefactor ; as that divine personage through whose work *glory in the highest* has issued to God, and all his perfections have poured a brighter radiance upon

them : Thus these seraphic spirits worshiped him in the manger, *ministered to him* in the wilderness, supported him in the garden, assisted him in his resurrection, ascended at his ascension and opened wide the everlasting gates for his admission, attended him in radiant procession until *he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high*, and there they *rest not day nor night*, adoring *this Lamb in the midst of the throne*. These riches, or this revenue of the Son will be encreasing through eternity, as the powers of all rational agents will be still advancing to higher and higher degrees of perfection ; as their capacities are forever enlarging they will not only receive more largely *the fulness of God*, but be able to offer a more abundant tribute of praise both for his creating and redeeming love. The Lord Jesus Christ thus RICH, for our sakes became POOR.

To pursue him in the various steps of his humiliation was our second proposition, and to this your attention is now invited. You probably notice, that in this, as in numerous other instances the inspired authors present at once to our view the extreme of Messiah's glory, and the extreme of his degradation ; when they are thus contrasted, each, if the expression be allowed, appears to greater advantage, and we are excited to higher transports of wonder and praise. The meanness of his manhood serves as a foil to

render more illustrious the glories of his god-head, and the glories of his god-head render more mean the meanness of the manhood. The seraphic prophet thus pronounces him in the same verse *a child born, a son given, and the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace.* The mind, reflecting on the feebleness, the helplessness of a new-born babe, and then contrasting with that the omnipotence of Almighty God kindles into the highest extacy of admiration at his goodness; it pauses and asks, *is this the manner of God with men?* Who can survey the height and depth, and length and breadth of such love? *It passes finite knowledge.*

HE became POOR. It may not be improper to correct an error which some have entertained on this subject; they have concluded from this, and similar expressions that the properties of the divine nature really underwent a change. This was absolutely impossible. When he became man, he did not cease to be God; although the two natures were intimately united in the person of Immanuel, yet each nature remained utterly distinct from the other; the perfections of his God-head did not become finite, the properties of his manhood did not become infinite: “He was and continues to be both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever.”

THE *poverty* here mentioned expresses the

whole humiliation and sufferings to which Jesus submitted in the room, and for the salvation of man.

HE became poor, when from eternity he stooped to be substituted in the room of his chosen. This was the commencement of his poverty, and an illustrious instance of his grace : Although he was the father's equal as God, he condescended to become his servant as mediator : Although he was Jehovah, over all, without law, above law he submitted, as surety for man, *to be made under the law*, to bear their iniquities, to purchase them with his own blood and reconcile them to God by himself : The apostle notices this instance of his condescension with peculiar wonder and gratitude. *Let the same mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ; Who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man.*

HE became poor, when he assumed our nature and veiled the glories of his divinity in the frailty and the meanness of the man. This was a second, and most astonishing instance of his humiliation and grace. *Without all controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh :* In contemplating this event, we are equally astonished at that depth of humili-

liation to which the divinity stooped, and that height of glory to which the manhood was exalted. The very circumstances in which he was born tend to excite higher emotions of wonder at his condescension. His residence was not a splendid palace, but a manger ; his rayment was not the costly robes of state, but, as the historian mentions, *he was wrapped in swaddling cloths* ; his mother and his immediate connections were not the magnificent or honorable of this world, but an obscure and contemptible family. He thus humbled himself not only in becoming man, but in assuming our nature with every circumstance of meanness and abasement.

HE *became poor*, by submitting to ten thousand instances of reproach and mortification through life. What is the history of the Son of God from his birth to his death, but a history of poverty, of insult, and suffering ? Instead of being courted by the fashionable or mighty of this world, he was regarded by them with scorn and disdain ; *Him none of the princes of this world knew* ; they acknowledged him not as their equal ; they did not frequent his society as one worthy of their friendship : Instead of occupying the costly mansion, or sitting on the lap of outward ease and indulgence, *he had not where to lay his head*, and suffered in their turn hunger, and thirst, and fatigue : He did not wear the ensigns of royalty, or ride in triumph over the

necks of his enemies, but was subject to the authority of his parents, obeyed the commands of an earthly ruler, and was at last betrayed into the hands of sinful men : He did not leave this world with those marks of honor which have often distinguished conquerors and princes ; he did not bear the palm in his hand, or the laurel upon his head, these emblems of victory and glory, but was openly *set at naught*, was *spit upon*, was *scourged*, and was signalized by his betrayers and murderers with every conceivable mark of insult and infamy. We should naturally expect that, while earth and hell were combining their malignant ingenuity to aggravate his abasement and agony, his Father at least would interpose and support his departing spirit with the reviving smiles of his countenance : but the fact was directly the reverse. A cloud deeper than midnight, impenetrable as *the blackness of darkness* which envelopes the damned in hell, overcast for a time the soul of the surety, and the very natural sun refused a solitary ray to enlighten or cheer the eyes of its expiring Creator. How plaintive, how melancholy, how melting was his language in the garden, and on the cross ! *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death ; O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me ; Again, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring ?* Then it was that the Son of God who had been formerly *rich* became

poor in the extreme. No misery can be imagined, nay, it is not extravagant to assert, that no misery could be inflicted which was not inflicted with unabating horrors on our suffering substitute. Formerly, when he had been oppressed in body, the calm, and the consolation of his mind ministered support, but now the very distress of his body is almost infinitely heightened by the wrath of God which, like a mighty torrent, overflowed and overwhelmed his spirit :— Formerly, when tempted by devils, he was ministered unto by angels ; when misrepresented and blasphemed by his enemies, he was vindicated and adored by his disciples ; his righteous Father upon various occasions openly acknowledged and countenanced him ; by the waters of Jordan he announced him *his beloved Son*, and on Tabor's mount unveiled for a few moments that glory which the redeemer had with him before the world began : But now he is forsaken by all his former friends, and heaven and earth, and hell are armed against him. *Behold what manner of love is this ?* He who was in the form of God ; who was *the brightness of the divine glory*, and *over all blessed for ever* becomes a man of sorrows, is acquainted with grief, and is made a curse for us. To aim at feebly illustrating this GRACE was our third proposition, to which we now proceed. *Ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE word grace signifies free favor ; bounty

expressed where it is altogether undeserved, and without any prospect of reward: In proportion as this favor is rich, unsolicited, unmerited, this grace rises in value, and excites our astonishment.

ALL this poverty and humiliation were of grace,

1. BECAUSE the redeemer could not be materially profited by us; as he was necessarily blessed before we existed, he must have continued necessarily blessed had we never been restored from our apostacy. Man frequently communicates his favors where they are unexpected and undeserved, from the prospect of a reward; with a view probably of promoting his interest, or honor, or happiness. But no consideration of this kind could possibly actuate the redeemer. *Can a man be profitable to God as he that is wise is profitable to himself?* The essential happiness or glory of his nature can neither be enhanced by our obedience, nor diminished by our ingratitude or obduracy. These are *the same yesterday*, from eternity past, *to-day*, amidst all the changes of time, *and for ever*, through eternity to come.

THIS poverty, this humiliation was of grace, because,

2. THERE was no comparison between the character of the person suffering, and the character of those for whom he suffered. We usually

feel a degree of esteem for one that is our equal ; we feel still more respect for a superior, and in the time of his distress may be disposed to accommodate or assist him. But the grace of the Son appears altogether singular, when we reflect that those for whom he interposed were not his superiors ; they were not his equals, but infinitely inferior. Nay, a comparison between his dignity and their's cannot be made. Some comparison might be drawn between a beast of the field, and rational man, or between the lowest insect upon the earth, and the loftiest angel in heaven : They both derived their existence from God, and on his good pleasure they depend for all they enjoy, or can expect : But there is not even a shade of comparison between finite, and infinite, between frail, mortal man, and the ever-living, life-giving God. *Who in the heavens may be compared to the Lord, or who among the sons of the mighty may be likened to our God ?* This was grace indeed, that he who was the everlasting Father ; the creator of the ends of the earth ; the king eternal, immortal, invisible, should come and suffer, and bleed, and die in the room of feeble, mortal, miserable man ; that the creator should be condemned for the sin of the creature, and the creature justified through the righteousness of the creator. Here is condescension the depth of which angels cannot fathom.

THIS grace appears still more astonishing, when we reflect,

3. THAT the Son of God submitted to all this reproach, endured all these sufferings for man in a state of actual apostacy from God, and rising up in rebellion against his throne. Had we retained our primitive innocence and dignity, it must have been pronounced immense condescension that the living God should assume our nature, and suffer for our advantage : But when we consider that he assumed this nature degraded by transgression ; that he suffered for man, not arrayed in primitive innocence, but sullied and blackened with the foulest pollution ; for man in actual and avowed hostilities against his God, shewing despite to his mercy, bidding defiance to his wrath, and spurning all his entreaties ; that he should suffer for man in these circumstances is a display of grace *that passeth all utterance, and understanding.* *Scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die : But God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* This same apostle exhibits the condescension of Christ as the highest possible example for us to imitate ; he argues that we can never stoop too low for him who was thus humbled for us. *Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus : Who being in the form of God thought it no robbery to be equal with God : But made himself of no reputation, took upon himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ; and being found in fashion*

as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

PERMIT me now to conclude this discourse with a few practical reflections.

1. WE learn from this doctrine the rich, self-moved, unmerited love of our Lord Jesus Christ. The son is considered by many as altogether passive in the work of our redemption ; as coming merely in the capacity of a servant to work out a justifying righteousness. But we ought to entertain more exalted conceptions of the everlasting Jesus. The very consideration that he became a *servant* was an ineffable display of his good will. All that he did for the recovery of perishing man was done voluntarily : love the most pure, the most fervent, the most divine was the moving cause. While love the most adorable prompted the Father not to *spare* his Son ; love equally wonderful prompted the Son not to *spare* himself ; to be emptied of his glory, to become acquainted with grief, to submit to every species of ignominy and agony for us ; *Greater love among men hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friend*, but surely it is love infinitely greater that a God should lay down his life for man, and the creator become a curse for his creature. When the Saviour wept at the grave of Lazarus, the spectators, lost in astonishment, remarked to each o-

ther *behold how he loved him* ; but what is a tear to the effusion of his blood, the surrender of his life for our sakes. This is a consideration which holy men, moved by the Holy Ghost, often contemplated for inflaming their own hearts, and ours. He by HIMSELF purged our sins ; he gave his LIFE a ransom for many ; he gave HIMSELF *for us to redeem from all iniquity* ; had he given *thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil*, the mercy had been great ; had he appointed one order of rational beings to suffer by substitution for another the mercy had been greater, but that he should give HIMSELF is a display of mercy which suffers by passing through the feebleness of human expression or comprehension. By all our attempts to unfold it to others, its glories are obscured, and its immensity appears diminished : To attempt describing it is like attempting to grasp the ocean, or measure infinitude with a line which is finite. This consideration ever transports the spirits of the just in glory, and constrains them to strike their golden harps on the highest string. *To him that loved us, and, they do not add, gave us being, poured around us affluence of worldly enjoyment, promoted us to distinction on earth, and gave us victory over death ; their extatic imaginations instantly seize redeeming love as the subject of their song, and washed us from our sins in his own blood* ; other blessings may attend as ministers, but the gift of HIMSELF must

fit on the throne : This was first and highest in their hearts, this must therefore be first and highest in their song.

2. THIS doctrine presents to our minds the strongest possible argument for obeying every command of our gracious Lord and manifesting the warmest zeal for his glory. Can we stoop too low for him who stooped so low for us ; Can we do too much for him who hath done so much for us ? Lively conceptions of the humiliation and the sufferings of Christ must silence all the murmurings of the flesh, and produce a most cheerful, ardent obedience to all his commands. Can we complain of a little weariness in his service, when the Lord of glory *was weary* for our sakes ; can we complain of a little reproach, or contempt in promoting his cause, when on our account he *was reviled*, he *was blasphemed*, he *was buffeted*, and treated with every mark of ignominy and scorn ; can we refuse a little of our silver, or our gold in supplying the temporal wants of his poor, or propagating his gospel through the world, when he for our sakes became *poor* ; *All that a man hath will he give for his life*, and all that a man hath will he give up rather than his life, but the love of Christ rose transcendent to this consideration and impelled him to *lay down even his life for his people* ; and can we, under the impressions of his goodness, refuse a share of our perishable wealth

when he requires it? *Sooner let our hands forget their cunning, than cease to contribute for the advancement of his cause ; sooner let our tongue cleave to the roof of our mouth, than be silent from speaking forth his praise, or recommending his great salvation.* The moment that our love languishes let us go to Gethsemane, or Calvary as a mean of enflaming it : *There the smoking flax, must instantly revive, and brighten into a flame.* It is impossible for him to be cold who basks under the rays of this sun : It is impossible for him to feel indifferent to the person, or people, or interest, or glory of Jesus who diligently contemplates the ardor and immensity of his love to us. How powerful, how elevating was the effect of these reflections on the soul of the great apostle of the Gentiles? *The love of Christ constrains, transports, me ; while he contemplated the grace of the eternal son he lost sight of himself, of the world, of every earthly comfort and cross ; he scarcely knew whether he was in the body or out of the body, because, he adds, we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and he died for all that they who live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to him who died for them and rose again.*

LASTLY—Let all learn from this doctrine the immense value of the human soul, and the danger of rejecting the offered redemption. When we contemplate the enterprise of the human

mind, the vast schemes which it is capable of contriving, and accomplishing, we feel impressed with a sense of its excellence and worth ; when we turn our eyes back to its creation, and see it fashioned after the image of God, we entertain still higher impressions of its dignity and value ; but it is through the humiliation and death of the ever blessed Jesus that we are furnished with incomparably the greatest proof of its excellence, and dignity. *For our sakes he became poor.* Surely that soul must be precious which required a sacrifice so costly ; surely that soul must be precious for which *the Lord of glory* was emptied of his glory, and *made of no reputation* ; for which he who was *altogether lovely* appeared *without comeliness, without form, without any beauty that we should desire him* ; for which the son must stoop to the condition of a servant ; for which the heir of all things must be deprived of a place *to lay his head* ; for which he who was *blessed for ever* becomes a *man of sorrows*, and is made a curse ; for which the prince of life becomes obedient unto death ; for which he who was the admiration of angels is exposed a spectacle of scorn and of mockery to men, and to devils ; for which he who was *in the form of God*, who was from eternity *brought up with him*, who enjoyed the cloudless emanations of his love was abandoned to darkness, and grief ; is denied a single ray of his countenance, or a drop of heaven's consolation. Was the soul thus precious

in the estimation of the Son of God, and can any appear regardless of their own souls? Surely their guilt must be highly coloured, and their condition inexcusable in the extreme who neglect so great salvation. Had the Lord God offered the remission of sin without any satisfaction to his justice, the refusal of such remission must have added to our misery; had he appointed the various orders of unfinning angels to suffer in the room of man, the rejection of this sacrifice must have greatly heightened our torment, and left us altogether without excuse, but he has done infinitely more than this: *He sent his own son to be the saviour of the world*; and surely he who spared not his own son, appearing for the salvation of man, will not, cannot consistently spare the man who neglects, or rejects this salvation, a salvation which cost so much sorrow, so much poverty, so much reproach, so many tears, tears of blood, yea, the very life of the Lord of life. *If he who despised Moses' law died without mercy before two or three witnesses, of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the spirit of grace?* And every sinner present who will not this day accept of precious Christ is guilty of trampling under foot his body and blood; he pours a practical contempt on all that the compassionate saviour endured from his

cradle to his cross, on every tear which he shed, on every groan which he uttered, on every pang which he felt for the benefit of our world.—*Hear this, ye that forget God, the redeemer, lest he tear you in pieces when there is none to deliver : Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little : Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.* And let all remember that none will perish with such guilt in their consciences, or such wrath upon their heads as those who perish amidst the offers of mercy.

Sermon X.

The Blessings which result to us from his Mediation.



2 COR. viii. 9.

THAT YE THROUGH HIS POVERTY MIGHT BE
RICH.

GODLINESS *with contentment is incomparably the greatest possible gain ; its pleasures are more pure, its riches more permanent, its honors more substantial, and its prospects more elevating than the world can promise her most favorite votaries. The merchandize of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof, than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches, and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her. Believer in Jesus Christ, however poor, or despised, or wretched be thine external condition thou art rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom : thou art entitled to an inheritance large as God can bestow, and satisfying as thy soul can desire : An inheritance which neither the moth shall corrupt, the flames*

consume, nor time itself impair. But art thou disposed to glory in thine attainments? Does pride secretly rise in thy bosom whilst thou art contemplating thy present privileges, or thy future prospects? Let all thine honors be prostrated at the foot of the cross, and glory exclusively in the suffering, bleeding saviour. To this condescending, compassionate Jesus thou art indebted for all that can be enjoyed in time, and all that may be expected through eternity. His *poverty* was thy riches; his *griefs* thy joy; his blood thy balm; his reproach thy glory; his death thy life; his cross thy crown. *Ye through his poverty are made rich,*

THE preceding part of this verse represented the ever to be adored Son as *becoming poor*; as leaving the bosom of his Father, entering our world, occupying the station of a servant, enduring innumerable sorrows, submitting to innumerable insults, and at last concluding a life of unparalleled grief with a death of unparalleled ignominy, and pain. *Tho' he was rich yet for your sakes he became poor: he poured out his soul unto the death: This captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings.* That clause of the verse which we are now called to discuss points out the infinitely gracious design of his condescension and death, *that ye might be rich.*

THESE *riches* comprehend, in one word, all

those blessings which flow to the ransomed soul, through the mediation of the co-eternal Son; and like their author are utterly indescribable, and inconceivable. We might possibly enumerate the particles of dust which form the globe of the earth, or the particles of water which fill up the caverns of ocean, but to enumerate all the benefits which flow to the believing soul thro' the Saviour's cross, or exhibit either of them in all its importance rises infinitely beyond the ability of mortals. *Eye hath not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* In order to meet our feeble capacities and to represent the blessings of redemption as a portion infinitely sufficient for the immortal soul they are set forth in scripture by a great variety of language. They are emphatically pronounced, *durable riches, and the meat which endureth to everlasting life,* in opposition to the wealth and the joys of this world which are equally uncertain, and unsatisfying; *the one thing needful,* which inconceivably enriches, although every thing else should be wanting; *the pearl of great price,* for securing which a man is justified in *selling all that he hath: a treasure in the heavens where moth cannot corrupt, nor thief break through and steal,* being secured for every heir beyond the possibility of failure or forfeiture, *an inheritance incorruptible, and a crown of glo-*

ry that *fadeth not away*, which will remain undecaying when all the profits, and all the honors of the world with their miserable possessors have perished forever. In short, both worlds are made over to the christian through the mediation of his adorable substitute, and infallibly secured by the written charter of his word ; *all things are yours*, says the apostle addressing the favored heirs of salvation, *things present, and things to come ; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's*.

THESE riches imply,

1. TEMPORAL blessings ; all that is requisite for our support during the present life. Man by his apostacy from the living God lost his title to temporal, no less than spiritual blessings ; he as completely forfeited every claim to the least crumb from the table of common providence, as to the favour of God, or the inheritance of eternal life. The sentence that was denounced against Adam in consequence of his transgression extended even to outward privileges. *Cursed be the ground for thy sake ; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee*. Had it not been for the interposition of the Son of God, and for the sake of his spiritual offspring a general blast must have instantly pervaded the natural world : the heavens must have become as brass, the earth as iron, and the herb of the field withered to its root, re-

fusing nourishment to man. But Jesus Jehovah actually removed the curse that was due to his people on account of their transgressions, and bought back the forfeited inheritance. He redeemed the bodies of his chosen, no less than their souls, and has therefore secured provision for the one no less than the other. *Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth; they shall possess the land, and be fed with the heritage of Jacob their father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* True it is, christian, thou mayest not perhaps roll in the affluence of this world; thou mayest not like the rich man be clothed in purple and fare sumptuously every day, yet whatever can redound to thy real good, or thy master's glory is secured in the covenant, is promised in the gospel, and shall be communicated. *In famine thou shalt be fed; my God shall supply all thy needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.* He who gives his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways; who sympathises in all thy sorrows; who is afflicted in all thine afflictions, and will at last raise up thy frail, vile body in incorruption and glory, will not suffer thee to want what is for thy real advantage. *Thou shalt dwell on high, thy place of defence shall be the munition of rocks; thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure.*

ALTHOUGH temporal blessings are included in the christian's charter, it also comprehends privi-

leges infinitely more valuable, and lasting. These riches imply,

2. REMISSION through the blood, and reconciliation through the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. We were naturally involved in an infinite debt, and utterly unable to offer a ransom ; bound over as lawful captives to the law and justice of Jehovah, without the possibility of accomplishing our freedom. *The redemption of the soul is precious, and must have ceased for ever,* as to any wisdom or ability of mortals. *No man could redeem himself ; neither could any man redeem his brother, or pay to God a ransom for him.* But in these circumstances of humiliation and of peril, the Son of God graciously interposed, and *restored that which he took not away* : He expiated with his own blood that curse which we had incurred ; he secured by the obedience of his own life a new title to that inheritance of glory which we had forfeited, and is thus *become the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.* *In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.* This complete, irreversible remission of all iniquity is a precious part of those riches which flow to us through the poverty of Jesus ; of that legacy which he bequeaths to the objects of his sovereign, everlasting love. *He hath finished transgression, and made an end of sin, and made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness* : Interested in this sacri-

fice, and this righteousness of the infinite surety, the sinner is not only discharged from all the guilt of his past transgressions, but possesses a written, and legal charter to all the glories of immortality. *Being justified by his grace, he is made an heir according to the hope of eternal life.* The Father who formerly appeared in the character of an avenging judge, who denounced tribulation and wrath against his iniquities is now perfectly *pacified*; with his own hand he draws up the sentence of his pardon, and proclaims in accents of love, *I will be merciful to thine unrighteousness; I, even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own name's sake, and will not remember thy sins.* Contemplating this privilege of the redeemed, the apostle breaks forth in the challenge of exultation and of gratitude, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God; who also maketh intercession for us.* Pardon and acceptance which result from the sacrifice of the surety appropriated by faith, may be considered as introductory to all other blessings. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.*

THESE riches imply,

3. OUR sanctification, or restoration to the moral image of Jehovah. This is another precious part of that inheritance which the ever blessed surety has purchased for his children, and promised in the glorious gospel. Merely to have procured the remission of their offences, and a title to the celestial kingdom, without actually preparing them for the enjoyment of that kingdom, would be an incomplete salvation. To offer the joys of heaven to the sinner in the midst of his corruptions, would be like attempting to amuse with the beauty of colours a man who wanted eyes to behold them ; or with the charms of music the man who had not the organ of hearing to enjoy its melody, or presenting the luxuries of life to him whose taste was utterly vitiated, and thus incapable of relishing them. But, thanks to the adorable saviour, that whom he pardons, he also purifies ; where he gives a title to the heavenly kingdom, he gives a heart capable of relishing its joys, and admiring its glories ; *He enlightens the eyes of their understandings, to know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints* : He diffuses over the heart a principle of love to God, of submission to his righteous will, and of ardent anxiety for his full, uninterrupted enjoyment. *Whom having not seen with his bodily eyes, the christian is enabled supremely to love, and in whom, although he sees him not, yet believing, he rejoices with a joy unspeakable, and*

full of glory. He is thus represented *as made of God to them*, not only *righteousness* entitling them to the inheritance of the saints in light, but *sanctification* actually making them meet for the enjoyment of that inheritance. That every gracious principle shall be implanted, and where it is implanted that it shall be improved and perfected, he has promised again, and again, in his word of salvation. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean ; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you.* The charter of the righteous as it respects their sanctification is no less clear and explicit, than as it respects their justification ; it infallibly assures them that the body of corruption shall be finally subdued ; that the image of their father which they had lost by transgression shall be fully restored, and they themselves at last *presented without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.*

THESE riches imply,

4. OUR adoption into the family of God, and our right to all the immunities of his children. How humiliating, how deplorable are the circumstances under which man is represented in his natural condition. He is emphatically pronounced *afar off ; alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him ; an alien*

from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world : he is represented as cast out in the open field ; as polluted in his own blood, and thus a spectacle of wretchedness, and scorn. He is literally a spiritual outcast, neither acknowledged in the family of God, nor interested in the privileges of his children. But through the substitution and sufferings of Christ Jesus Jehovah the forfeited inheritance is restored, and we obtain the adoption of sons. But now in Christ Jesus ye who were once afar off are brought nigh by the blood of Christ ; Ye are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Astonishing, thrice glorious change ? The alien is now adopted ; he who was formerly afar off, exposed in the open field to the loathing of his person is brought nigh, and introduced into the divine family never, never to be rejected more ; the child of wrath, the heir of hell becomes a child of God, and an heir of never ending glory : The spirit of adoption instantly takes possession of his heart, and in the riches of his grace, he bears witness with him that he is a child of God, sweetly emboldening him to cry, abba-Father. No wonder that the evangelist should exclaim in holy astonishment, Behold what manner of love hath the Father bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God. It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear

we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. It is impossible to describe, or comprehend all those privileges which are inseparably connected with this gracious act. The sinner then becomes related to God as his friend and father ; to Jesus as his surety and advocate ; to the Holy Ghost as his sanctifier and guide ; to the promises as his inviolable charter, and to heaven as his rightful, immortal inheritance. *If children, says the apostle, looking over the large catalogue of their privileges, if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we shall also be glorified together.* The eternal Father, in that moment, recognises them under the character of sons and daughters, and makes over himself and all that he can bestow as their infinite, unfading portion. *I will dwell in you, and walk in you ; I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters saith the Lord almighty,*

THESE riches imply,

5. SUPPORT amidst all the difficulties and consolation amidst the numerous distresses and discouragements of life. This world, through the transgression of man, is converted into a scene of vexation and sorrow ; and even the redeemed of the Lord are usually appointed to drink a full share of the bitter cup. Nay, in addition to the ordinary calamities of life which they experience

in common with others, they have trials altogether peculiar to themselves ; a painful conflict with a body of corruption, the occasional hidings of their father's countenance, and contempt and persecution for righteousness sake, form a train of sufferings known only to themselves, and from which the children of this world are utterly exempted. But, glory to the great captain of our salvation, that he not only supports amidst these, and other discouragements, but renders them all conducive to the spiritual and immortal interests of his chosen. *These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace,* is his gracious declaration ; *in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. I will not leave you comfortless ; I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you for ever. Fear thou not for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God ; I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* These promises of our gracious Lord have, a thousand times, been literally accomplished in the experience of his faithful followers. When their afflictions abounded, their consolations have much more abounded : Through his omnipotent arm supporting them, they have encountered every danger ; they have surmounted every obstacle ; they have gloried in tribulation ; they have received joyfully the spoiling of their goods ; they have arisen superior

alike to all the trials of life, and all the terrors of death. We hear one boldly exclaiming, *I can do all things*, discharge any duty, resist any temptation, and encounter any opposition *through Christ strengthening me ; I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ ; for when I am weak, then am I strong* : We hear him upon another occasion triumphantly challenging, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

THESE riches imply,

6. HEAVEN with its ineffable blessedness and glory. This may be pronounced the crowning, consummating blessing which is communicated by the infinitely gracious redeemer. All the mercies which he imparts in the present life ; all those riches which he bestows in the reconciliation of his people, in their adoption, and those occasional consolations which they enjoy are merely introductory to their future residence, and felicity in his presence. *I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish ; I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, ye may be also.* The Lord Jesus first

prepares them for that place ; he adorns them with his own righteousness, as with a robe ; he renews them in the spirit of their mind, giving them holy and heavenly dispositions ; and he also prepares heaven for them by appearing there as their advocate, and answering every accusation that can be brought against them. *Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me.*

WHAT will be the employment of the redeemed in heaven ; what is the peculiar nature of that blessedness and glory which they will eternally enjoy we cannot conceive in this state of imperfection. But enough is revealed to wither the glory of every thing created ; to elevate our hearts above this world, with its fleeting joys, and create in us a holy impatience *to depart and be with Christ*. There the blessed inhabitants are admitted into the immediate vision and fruition of God : *They see no longer through a glass darkly, but face to face ; they know no longer in part, but know even as also they are known.* The operations of God, in providence and grace, which now appear mysterious and dark ; at which their faith is frequently staggered and almost overthrown, will then be clearly and satisfactorily unfolded : Wisdom the most unerring, justice the most exact, love the most fervid, and mercy the most tender will appear to have reigned

in every part of his procedure to them, whether in nature or providence or grace. Each inhabitant of the heavenly world will emulate another, in acknowledging to the glory of the common captain of their salvation, *He hath done all things well* ; “ he hath brought order out of all our past confusion, light out of all the darkness which formerly surrounded his footsteps, and hath made crooked things straight ; ” they will then discover in the light of immortality, that all the afflictions of their earthly pilgrimage were both wisely and graciously ordered. David now sees that there was a necessity for the rebellion of Absalom his son ; Job for the loss of his children and property ; Jeremiah for his persecution as a prophet of the Lord ; Lazarus for the poverty of his lot, and exquisite bodily distress ; Paul for all the perils which he encountered by sea and by land, in promoting the gospel of his master. They clearly discern there was A NEED BE that they were formerly *in heaviness through these manifold temptations or trials*. As they will be admitted into the clearest discoveries of Jehovah, of his perfections and operations, they will also be promoted to the highest conceivable dignity. They are therefore represented as sitting on *thrones*, as possessing *a kingdom, a kingdom that shall never be moved* ; as bearing *palms* in their hands, an emblem of victory and triumph ; as wearing *crowns* upon their heads, *crowns of righteousness and life* ; as enjoying an *exceeding and eternal*

weight of glory : As the consummation of all their joys, they will be introduced into the most intimate and unceasing communion with Jesus their living head, and through him with Jehovah the Father and the Eternal Spirit. *They shall see him as he is ; they shall walk in his light ; they shall eat and drink with him at his table in his kingdom. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it.* But how small a portion of these joys or glories can now be uttered or conceived ? They are infinitely beyond the most eloquent tongue to describe, or the most excursive imagination to comprehend.—*Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered the heart of man to conceive those things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

THIS doctrine may be applied—

1. BY congratulating the righteous on the ineffable blessedness of their condition. *Riches and honors are theirs, yea durable riches and righteousness.* Lift up thine eyes, christian, and behold the heavens above ; survey creation around thee ; look upon thy right hand, and on thy left ; all these treasures are thine, because thou art a *joint-heir with Jesus Jehovah who is heir of all things.* Thine inheritance is not like the wealth of this world which perishes in the using ; which is equally unsatisfying in its nature,

and uncertain in its duration. *The portion of Jacob is not like them.* Thou hast an inheritance incorruptible ; a treasure lasting as eternity itself. Being a child of God, by rich, adopting grace, *thou art an heir.* To what ? To houses, or lands, or possessions ? No : Privileges infinitely more desirable and dignified are thine. *Thou art an heir of God.* Amazing thought. Who can comprehend the ten thousandth, thousandth part of its import ? *An heir of God.* Jehovah in all that he is, and all that he can communicate is thine ; his wisdom is thine to direct ; his power to protect ; his all-sufficiency to provide ; his faithfulness to fulfil what his grace has promised ; his eternity is the measure of thy duration and thy blessedness. *This God, believer in Jesus, is thy God for ever, and ever ; and will be thy guide even unto death.* And a joint-heir with Christ ; Thou hast a title, if I may use the strong expression, thou hast a title in common with the infinite redeemer to all the blessings of his purchase ; to all the treasures of grace and glory. His blood is thy ransom, his righteousness thy robe, his promise thy charter, his angels thy guardian spirits, his heaven thy home, his father thy father, and his God thy God. *Happy is that people that is in such a case ; yea, happy is that people whose God is Jehovah.* What remains for thee, christian, but to live constantly and exclusively on this thy portion ? Here is a fund which can never be exhausted, which cannot even be dimin-

ished by all that thou canst possibly draw from it. Here is a **LIVING fountain**, daily communicating fresh consolation and strength as thy wants may require. Indulge then the confident, the elevated, yet reasonable exultation of the holy prophet, *Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him*; or of the royal psalmist, *Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee : My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.*

“ To take a glimpse within the veil,

“ To know that God is mine,

“ Are springs of joy that never fail,

“ Unspeakable, divine.....

“ These are the joys which satisfy,

“ And sanctify the mind,

“ Which make the spirit mount on high,

“ And leave the world behind.”

2. **THIS** doctrine is a source of resignation to the righteous, amidst all the disappointments and sorrows of life. Were their afflictions ten thousand times more numerous, more painful, and longer continued than they are, they could scarcely be compared to those privileges which they already enjoy through Jesus their surety, or that glory which will shortly be revealed. Art thou,

christian, art thou doomed to inward sorrow, and darkness, and dejection now, there is an eternity of light and triumph before thee : *Thy sun shall then no more go down ; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself ; for the Lord shall remain thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.* Art thou conflicting with outward poverty or misery now, in Jesus thy husband thou possessest riches unsearchable ; thro' his mediation there is secured and reserved for thee a mansion in thy Father's kingdom, *an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens :* Art thou often in the depths of spiritual adversity, dejected through the prevalence of an unbelieving heart, or the abominations of the world around thee ? The period is approaching when *the oil of joy shall succeed thy present mourning, and the garment of praise this spirit of heaviness :* *There shall be no more sorrow nor sighing, and God with his own hand shall wipe away all tears from thine eyes.* Art thou treated with neglect, or even contempt by thine acquaintances on earth, be not disheartened by this consideration : Thy name, engraven in letters more splendid than gold, now shines on *the breast-plate of the high priest of thy profession ;* amidst all the glories of his exalted condition, he is not ashamed to call thee a brother, or a sister, and will ere long confess thee in the *presence of his Father and the holy angels.* Art thou wearied with this world of corruption and grief ? Art thou ardent-

ly longing for that blessed consummation when thou shalt see thy beloved as he is, and be filled with the joys of his salvation ? Soon, very soon these desires shall be fully gratified. It is the prayer of thine advocate in heaven, *Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am : that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me :* Such is his intercession in thy behalf, and let thy soul rejoice in the consideration, *that him the Father heareth always.* Again, I say, let the redeemed of the Lord learn from this doctrine to exercise submission amidst the various trials and discouragements of life : of either, or all the complicated evils of his earthly pilgrimage, the christian may justly exclaim, *None of these things trouble me ; the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared to that glory which shall be revealed :* Who would not patiently be tossed on the billows in the full confidence of shortly reaching the desired haven ? What soldier does not cheerfully submit to all the fatigue, and brave all the perils of the campaign, who has an assurance of shortly receiving the palm and the crown ? What christian will not rather endure a momentary sorrow in the prospect of *never, never ending joy ? Our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

3. THIS doctrine suggests the inconceivable, everlasting obligation of all the righteous to their

redeeming Lord. What hast thou, christian, which thou hast not received, and what hast thou received which was not procured at the immense expence of his life? All the blessings which thou hast in possession here, or in prospect hereafter, cost him the *travail of his soul*, and the effusion of his blood. *Through his poverty thou art made rich, and through his grief thou art brought to participate a fulness of joy and pleasures for evermore.* Art thou justified in the sight of Jehovah, acquitted freely and irreversibly from the guilt of thy past iniquities, and entitled to every desirable blessing in the time to come, *thou art justified freely by grace only through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus : You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled : In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight.*—Art thou, who wast *once as far off, a stranger, and a foreigner ;* art thou now brought nigh, restored to the favor of God, admitted to his most intimate fellowship, and enabled to approach him as thy Father, remember that *thou art brought nigh only by the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life ;* she commenced her purposes of love from eternity past, and will consummate them through eternity to come, to thine exceeding, ineffable joy ONLY, ONLY, *by Jesus Christ our Lord.* How deeply, how inconceivably art thou indebt-

ed to this compassionate, dying saviour, through whose work such glories open to thine admiring view ? Surely upon each recollection of what thou once wast, *poor, miserable, blind, naked, in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity* ; upon each contemplation of what thou now art, rescued from the fearful pit of perdition, *a child of God, an heir of the kingdom* ; upon each anticipation of what thou wilt shortly be, relieved from all the evils of life, and from that incomparably worst of evils a body of spiritual death which now encompasses thee ; possessed of all good, led up by the agency of the spirit, through the mediation of the son to the most endearing fellowship of the Father ; upon every reflection of this nature thy heart should bound with new extacies of love, and thy lips with new ascriptions of praise to *him who hath redeemed thee to God by his blood*. What will be the exercise of all the blessed before the throne for ever, but one unceasing hallelujah ; and surely it is proper to commence in timethat work which will form the delight and glory of eternity.

BE no longer *slothful in business, but let thy soul and all within thee be stirred up to magnify the Lord* ; let the members of thy body be consecrated from henceforth as *instruments of righteousness to holiness*. “ The eyes of all are upon thee,” as an ingenious, excellent author remarks, “ the eye of the world to censure thee ; the eye

of Satan to distress thee ; the eye of the church to be edified by thee ; the eye of angels to glorify God for thee ; the eye of Christ to intercede in thy behalf ; and the all-seeing eye of Jehovah to whom thou criest abba-father to bless and protect thee. Say to thyself, I am adopted into God's family, and from being an execrable slave am made his freeman, his son, and his heir ; I am entitled through my redeeming Lord to all the privileges of grace set forth in his declared will ; I have tasted some of these privileges as an unperishing earnest of an imperishable inheritance, and I am assured that I shall have full possession in the best time, and forevermore. What then becomes me ? How ought I to live, and to speak and think ? Lord I am ashamed of myself ; I am covered with confusion, and abasement, that I, for whom thou hast done so much, am living and doing so little for thee ; if thy mercy did not *endure forever* it could not have endured to put up with such a base worm as me, with such long-suffering and grace. O pity my weakness which thou knewest from my birth, and suit all the mercies of thy holy adoption to my various occasions and thine own glory. I only know and feel that I would be thine, and none but thine forever. Cause me therefore to live as becometh thy gospel, my own happiness and my unchanging, everlasting relation to thee. Cause me to live more and more as one, who hath a title and a hope to live with an innumera-

ble company of holy beings, with an holy Jesus, and with thee my holy and heavenly Father forever and ever. I fall down before thy throne; O make me to be, what thou wouldst have me to be, and let me be that to all eternity. Whoever thou art that canst utter this language, take courage and peace; it is the voice of the spirit of adoption within thee. O go on and prosper; the Lord enlighten thee and give thee more peace; give thee every *earnest* of his blessing, every *first fruit* of his glory below, and in his own time afford thee an abundant entrance into his everlasting kingdom."*—AMEN.

* HORÆ. SOLITARÆ, Vol. ii. 256—7.

Sermon XI.

The Holy Ghost the great Agent in our Regeneration, and his mercy illustriously manifested in that work.



EPHESIANS ii. 4, 5.

BUT GOD WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US; EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

THE great, the uniform design of divine revelation is to level the pride, the self-importance of man and on its ruins to establish the sovereign grace of Jehovah. In this heavenly oracle the offspring of Adam are invariably represented as *guilty*, and therefore obnoxious to the justice of God; as *defiled* and therefore odious to the pure eye of his holiness; as altogether *wretched*, and consequently in absolute need of divine mercy; in short, they are uniformly represented as floating on a tempestuous ocean without either chart or compass for directing to any peaceful haven, until sovereign love interpose in their behalf. The doctrines of human wretchedness, and of divine, victorious grace which are exhibited at large throughout the scriptures are concisely, yet luminously presented in the

verses which have now been read. *God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us ; even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ.*

THE apostle exhibits Jehovah as not only merciful but rich in mercy ; This excellence dwells partially in man ; we feel occasionally the emotion of pity towards those that are in distress and some disposition to relieve them, but in man it dwells as a stream which is easily dried up ; in the Lord God it resides as in a fountain, ever-flowing, yet never exhausted, never lessened. *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.* When we melt at the miseries of others, and are disposed to impart relief, we frequently want the necessary means, and thus fail in our wishes, but Jehovah is rich in mercy, as he is never defeated in his gracious intentions ; he can easily devise means for accomplishing the everlasting purposes of his good will.

FOR *his great love wherewith he loved us.* The sovereign purpose of God from eternity was the origin of all the blessings which he communicates in time : the former was the fountain, the latter are only streams which issue forth from that fountain. *Whom he predestinated, them he also called ; I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

The apostle calls it a GREAT LOVE *wherewith he loved us.* This may be designed to express the immensity of that gift which he offered for our redemption, *even his son.* *Herein is love not that we loved God but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*

THIS was the highest display of love which Jehovah could exhibit, and must forever excite the highest admiration of its favored objects. It is a great love if we regard the unutterably precious benefits which were designed for his chosen. He blesses with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus ; he gives them the free and full remission of all their trespasses ; a real unalienable adoption into that family from which they were excluded ; a complete restoration to that image of God which was lost by the fall and an exceeding abundant glory in the life to come. Such is the love which the Lord God exercised to man, and after all that can be spoken, or written, or conceived, it must appear unutterably and inconceivably GREAT to eternity.

WHEN *we were dead in sins.* This expresses the abject and deplorable condition of mankind in general. They are legally dead. As transgressors of the divine law they are under its righteous, and awful sentence ; cut off from every claim to the favor of God, and justly exposed

to the flock of his avenging justice. *Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may become guilty before God.* They are morally, or spiritually dead; destitute either of ability or inclination to effect their own deliverance; as incapable of rising to spiritual life as the man who is naturally dead is incapable of raising himself to natural life. All the wisdom and strength which remain are exerted in opposition to God, and holiness. *They are enemies in their minds by wicked works; they are not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* This utter depravity pervades alike all the faculties of the human soul. The understanding which was originally created in knowledge, is now clouded with ignorance; the will which once yielded a prompt, cheerful obedience to the requirements of its creator now discovers the most malignant opposition; *it is enmity against God.* The affections which once joyed in Jehovah as their portion, now center supremely upon the world. *The whole head, to use the language of an inspired prophet, the whole head is sick with the mortal distemper of sin, and the whole heart is faint,* altogether disqualified for any spiritual exertion. The apostle includes himself in the number, when *WE were dead in sin,* teaching us that there is no exception from the general charge; this is not the situation merely of the heathen who are without any written revelation;

it is not the melancholy situation of this or the other person whose principles are more licentious, or whose practices are universally abandoned ; but the situation of all without exception, whether Jew or Gentile, whether the more refined moralist, or the open, profligate debauchee. *There is none righteous, by nature, no not one.* If any difference now exist, it is effected exclusively by the distinguishing love of God ; *there is none that doeth good*, until renewed by the abundant mercy of Jehovah. We who are now the apostles of the Lamb, and instrumental in turning others to righteousness were naturally *unholy, disobedient, serving divers lusts and pleasures*. He mentions with peculiar emphasis, **EVEN** *when we were dead in sin*, lying in the very midst of our abominations ; *hateful and hating one another*. There were no qualifications in them predisposing them for this change ; no ingenuous relentings for what is past, no kindly movements of the heart towards God, as their portion or joy. Sovereign grace displays her prerogatives not only in saving the chiefest of sinners ; numbering among her trophies *fornicators, and idolators, and adulterers*, but by effectually calling them in the very height of their impious career ; a Gardner was savingly caught in the midst of his midnight revels, and a Saul on his road to Damascus when with a fury more malignant than usual he was *breathing out slaughter against the church of Christ*. *The grace of God*

was exceedingly abundant, acknowledges this same apostle, with faith and love which was in Christ Jesus ; I was a blasphemer, a persecutor, an injurious person, but I obtained mercy.

HATH quickened us. The change effected on the soul in regeneration is variously expressed in scripture, answerable to the various characters by which the sinner is described. Sometimes he is represented as in ignorance or darkness, and this change is expressed by the infusion of light. *Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord : God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined upon your hearts, to give you the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Sometimes the sinner is represented as wholly polluted, as *deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ;* and this change is expressed by the communication of principles holy and spiritual. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you : I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.* Again he is represented as dead, and this change is expressed by the infusion of new life. *The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live : Even when we were dead in sins hath quickened ; hath made us alive to God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* All this variety of language is employed to shew that the change wrought upon the sinner is not imaginary, but real ; all the energies of

the immortal soul undergo a real and lasting renovation ; *the man is renewed in the spirit of his mind* ; he is created in Christ Jesus unto good works ; he is born from above ; he is begotten again to a lively hope ; he puts off the old man with his deeds, and puts on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

QUICKENED us together with Christ. A legal union actually existed between the redeemer, and his ransomed from eternity, and consequently whatever was done by him was virtually done by them. When he suffered and died, they, being represented in him, also suffered and died ; *I am crucified with Christ*, says the apostle ; *God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I to the world*. When he their public head was buried, they were virtually buried with him. They are made conformable to him in his death : *they are buried with him in baptism*. When he revived and arose the conqueror of the grave, they virtually revived and arose with him. *He hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus*. *Ye are risen with Christ, seek those things that are above*. The resurrection of Jesus their representing head, was a pledge of their spiritual resurrection in time ; that they shall be actually quickened by his spirit, and raised up to a life of holiness and

consolation in this world : It was also a pledge that their bodies should revive and arise to a blessed immortality in the world to come. *Thy dead men shall live ; together with my dead body shall they arise.*

THREE very important truths are presented for our consideration in these verses. 1. The change produced on the sinner in his union to the saviour, *he is quickened* : 2. The exclusive author of this change ; and 3. That in the accomplishment of this work the most abundant, unmerited mercy is displayed.

AND the Lord grant that while we humbly aim at illustrating his own truth, his almighty arm may be made bare in this assembly ; may the exceeding greatness of that power which was wrought in Christ raising him from the dead, work powerfully upon many souls that are present ; then there will be *a visible shaking among the dry bones ; bone will instantly come to his bone in this valley of vision.*

THE change effected upon the sinner is pronounced *a quickening together with Christ*, and consists,

1. IN the infusion of new light into his understanding. This is usually considered the leading faculty of the human soul, and is the first subject on which the Holy Ghost operates in regenera-

tion. It is asserted by some that the knowledge of man sustained little injury by the fall, and that the shock is experienced chiefly in his will: They contend therefore that as human depravity consists principally in the enmity of the heart, the great office of the spirit in regeneration is the removal of that enmity: That the glory of his power and grace shines principally, if not entirely in making the subjects of his operations WIL-LING to acquiesce in the proposed method of salvation. With all deference to those respectable names by which this sentiment is sanctioned, we feel constrained to reject it as not resting on *the foundation of the apostles and prophets*. Why is the Son of God in his mediatorial character pronounced *a prophet, the morning star, the sun of righteousness, the faithful and true witness, the messenger of the covenant, a teacher sent from God, a light to lighten the gentiles*, unless those whom he was appointed to restore were *ignorant*, and required instruction? We cannot suppose that Jehovah in his infinite wisdom would invest the Son with an office, unless there was necessity for exercising it. This would be like sending a physician when there was no patient in whose cure his skill might be exerted, or appointing another sun to a system sufficiently illumined already.—Why is the divine spirit, the immediate agent in our effectual calling, entitled *the spirit of light and of a sound mind; the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, unless to in-

struct us that in applying the salvation of Jesus he actually enlightens the understanding and discovers the excellence of this plan? *When HE is come he shall reprove, convince, give the most irresistible demonstration to the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment: He shall receive of mine and shall shew it unto you.* Why is divine teaching so frequently promised, and promised as a leading blessing of the covenant, unless it is indispensibly requisite to our salvation? Is it not written in the prophets, *they shall be all taught of God: Zion's children shall all know the Lord, and great shall be the peace of her children: I will give them an heart to know me that I am Jehovah, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God:* This teaching is essentially different from that external teaching of the word which is common to all who enjoy the dispensation of the gospel: It is the peculiar privilege of Zion's children, and is derived from the influences of the Holy Ghost, immediately communicated to the soul: *I will give them an heart to know me.* That knowledge which issues in eternal life as its end is really a supernatural gift; it lies as far beyond the reach of unassisted nature as faith, or repentance, or love, or any other grace which is accompanied with salvation. But that a divine illumination is necessary, and constitutes a part of the spirit's office in regeneration is established beyond controversy by the most plain, undeniable declarations of scripture. Ig-

norance of God and of ourselves is there represented as an essential part of the curse to which we are subjected, no less than enmity against him ; and the infusion of new light into the understanding is pronounced a blessing no less important than the communication of love to the heart. Is not the natural man described as *having the understanding darkened, as alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in him, because of the blindness of his mind ?* Here, as if one expression was insufficient to point out our utter, absolute ignorance in spiritual things, the Eternal God uses a variety. *The understanding is said to be darkened*, as the body is dark without the eye, or the natural world becomes dark without the light of the natural sun : *Being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them.* Man is here represented as *alienated* from the living God, merely because he is *ignorant* of him : We cannot possibly love an object of which we have not some competent knowledge ; we cannot delight in God, although perfection itself, if the eyes of the understanding are shut against any discovery of his perfections.— Again, *the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God ; they are foolishness to him ; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned ; they are savingly discovered only by the illuminating influences of the Holy Ghost.* Add to these considerations that our effectual calling is as frequently expressed by a renovation

of the understanding as of the heart. Ye were once *DARKNESS*,* but are now light in the

* *THE Greek word rendered darkness in all these instances corresponds precisely with the Hebrew word, which is used to express the darkness of the world previous to the formation of the sun ; and the change produced upon the mind is represented to be as real as that produced in the natural world at the creation of this luminary. God said let there be light and there was light ; and that God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness shines upon the heart giving the light of saving knowledge. What may we infer from this consideration ? Surely it instructs us that as darkness was upon the face of the deep, until the lights of heaven were formed, darkness no less profound and impenetrable covers the mind of man until enlightened by the spirit of wisdom. There is not even the shadow of propriety in applying these and similar passages to the heathen, who wanted the advantages of revelation. They relate to all without discrimination until taught of Jehovah. We preach Christ crucified to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness, but to them that are called both Jews and Greeks Christ the wisdom of God, and the power of God. These men enjoyed equal external advantages. The same apostle had addressed them, and a crucified Christ was invariably the theme of his discourse ; yet how different was its reception by these hearers ? To the Greeks, notwithstanding all their attainments in natural wisdom, it was foolishness : all that the apostle proclaimed of the substitution of the Son of God in the room of sinners, and of our justification through his righteousness was in their estimation an idle tale, a fable cunningly devised ; all the effulgence of that wisdom, that condescension, that*

Lord : Those who are begotten again to the lively hope of salvation are admonished to shew forth the praises of him who called them out of DARKNESS into his marvellous light. Paul, that pre-eminent preacher of righteousness, was sent abroad to open the eyes of the blind, and turn them from DARKNESS to light : And in the execution of his commission how ardently does he pray, That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ would give them the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. These Ephesians already enjoyed the word of wisdom ; the gospel in all its glory was shining around them. But the natural sun gives no light to him who has not eyes to behold it, and the gospel, however glorious, has no glory to him who possesses not a spiritual sense to discern it : This apostle therefore pleads that the eyes of their understanding being enlightened they might know what was the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints.

FROM this variety of scripture evidence we conclude that the natural man is not only *alien-*
love which shone so transcendently through the cross of Calvary, was as really lost to them as the splendors of the meridian sun to the man that was born blind ; but to them that are called, who had received an unction from on high to know all things, this Christ appeared the wisdom of God, the most illustrious display of his prudence and grace.

ated from God, but utterly *ignorant* of him, and that the communication of light to the mind constitutes an essential part of his translation from spiritual death to spiritual life. *He is created in KNOWLEDGE after the image of him that made him*; he obtains new discoveries of Jehovah in his holiness, his justice, his goodness and veracity; new discoveries of Jesus in the riches of his love, in the excellencies of his offices, in the fulness of his covenant and the freedom of his salvation; he obtains new discoveries of himself, of his aggravated guilt, of his *desperate* pollution and wretchedness; new discoveries of the world in its abject vanity, and of eternity in its infinite importance.

THIS illumination of the understanding is accompanied,

2. WITH the acquiescence of the will. As the man famishing with thirst readily drinks the cooling draught when offered him, or the man tortured with some dreadful disease eagerly receives the medicine when presented, so the sinner, convinced in the light of eternal truth, of his disease and danger, cordially welcomes the *balm of Gilead and the physician there*. No compulsion is then necessary. The sinner is as voluntary in accepting remission through the surety's sacrifice, and reposing his soul beneath the canopy of free grace, as the *man-slayer* when pur-

fued by the avenger of blood, was voluntary in fleeing *to the city of refuge*, or as a man caught in a thunderstorm willingly betakes himself to the first shelter in his reach. *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power ; every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me ;* The moment that the understanding is savingly enlightened to behold the glory and the suitability of Jesus, the hand of faith is reached out to receive him. This is the order established by the illustrious assembly of Westminster. “ Effectual calling is the work of God’s spirit whereby convincing us of our sins and misery ; enlightening our minds in the the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ as freely offered in the gospel.”* The whole man is then re-

NOTE.

* THE sentiment that the understanding of man is little impaired by the fall, and that the enmity of his heart is the principal obstacle to his conversion, seems to be gradually pervading many churches in our country. The reader will excuse me for presenting him with the sentiments of some eminent divines on this subject. Perhaps higher uninspired authority than the Genevan reformer cannot be expected ; I therefore take pleasure in offering first a quotation from him. “ The human mind is destitute of any faculty for beholding the mysteries of celestial wisdom which are laid up in Christ ; nay, all the human senses are defective in this respect, until God opens our eyes to discern his glory because his spirit above enlightens our darkness.”

newed. His affections center upon God as his glory and joy ; they ascend also in earnest, de-

Calv. in Matt. xvi. 17. *This father of the reformation again remarks, " The eyes of the understanding are blind, until opened of the Lord ; all our wisdom is folly and ignorance, until we are effectually taught by the power and sovereignty of the spirit ; finally, the knowledge of our heavenly calling surpasseth our comprehension until God the spirit by a secret revelation discovers it to us."*—Calv. in Eph. i. 17, 18. *Equally pertinent and satisfactory is his comment on John vi. 45. " The kind of teaching mentioned by the prophet does not consist merely in an external voice, or revelation, but in the secret, hidden operations of the Holy-Ghost : The inward illumination of the heart is the prerogative of God."* With these correspond the remarks of his profound cotemporary and colleague. *" The apostle does not affirm that the faculties of the unrenewed man are entirely impaired, but that he has no faculty at all for comprehending spiritual objects ; these cannot be known except spiritually, that is, by the power and breathing of the holy spirit."*—Beza. Com. in 1 Cor. ii. 14. *With the foregoing remarks of two eminent reformers coincide the sentiments of a distinguished prelate of the 17th century. " Being ignorant of God and of ourselves, it follows that we love not God, because we know him not. But the first character of his renewed image in the soul is light, as it was the first in the natural or material world. There is a spirit of light and knowledge flows from Jesus Christ unto the souls of believers that acquaints them with the mysteries of the kingdom which cannot otherwise be known. And the excellency the christian sees in God, and his son Jesus Christ, by this new light, inflames his heart with their*

vout aspirations to heaven as his eternal home, and the very members of his body become instruments of righteousness unto holiness.

love, fills him with estimation of the Lord Jesus, and makes the world, and all things in it, that he esteemed before, mean and base in his eyes."—Arch. Leight, Com. in 1 Pet. ii. 9. The sentiments of the most learned and judicious Dr. Owen may be considered next. "Spiritual darkness is in and upon all men, until God by an almighty and effectual work of the spirit shine into them, or create light in them. This teaching us the word and will of God in the manner wherein we are taught it by the spirit, our comforter, is an eminent part of our unction by him; opening blind eyes, giving a new understanding, shining into our hearts, to give us a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, enabling us to receive spiritual things in a spiritual light."—Owen's Discourse on the Holy Spirit, Vol. i. 388, also his Distinct Com. 389. Lon. edit. I shall next offer the observations of a dissenting minister in England, equally distinguished for learning and piety. "Opening the eyes precedes the conversion from darkness to light in God's operation. The first appearance of life, when he raiseth the soul is in the clearness and distinctness of its knowledge of God. As a state of nature is set forth under the term of darkness, so a state of grace is often termed light, that being the first work in the new creation as it was the first word of command in the old. The understanding is the original wheel which God primarily sets in order, from whence he doth influence secondarily all the other faculties of the soul; therefore when the understanding savingly apprehends the deformity of sin, the will must needs hate it: when it apprehends the mercy of God,

THUS the change is effected, and the sinner who was once dead is quickened together with

and the beauty of holiness, the will must needs love him, and the higher these degrees of saving illumination are in the mind, the stronger and firmer are the habits and acts of grace in the will. This illumination of the spirit is before the other of inclining the will, for the understanding is first exercised about the word as true, before the will is concerned in it as good."—Char. on Reg. Vol. ii. 218—9. *Few have written with greater accuracy and ability on these distinguishing doctrines of christianity, than a late divine of our own country, and with his remarks I shall conclude these quotations. "The spirit of God works grace in us by illuminating our minds, and giving us the right exercise of our understandings. In what manner is the will changed, and how does the Lord Jesus Christ bring the stubborn, obdurate heart of the sinner into subjection to himself? To this I answer, by giving them a real and affecting sight of things as they are: He does but give them a true discovery, a powerful impression of what is best for them, and that necessarily determines their choice. By this he conquers the enmity to God there is in their hearts, and brings them from the power of their lusts, of satan, and of the world, into the fear and favor of God. By opening their eyes he turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God, that they may have inheritance among those that are sanctified."*—Dickinson on conversion.

Such are the sentiments of these distinguished lights in the christian church; of men who appeared in different ages; who were educated in different modes; who appertained to different communions, and who were

Christ. All the members of the new man are in that moment formed which, through occasional supplies from Jesus the living head, grow up to the measure of the stature of his fulness. This principle of spiritual life then imparted can never be destroyed, but remains imperishable amidst every possible vicissitude, until grace is perfected in glory. *The water that I give thee*, says the gracious redeemer, “the regenerating, sanctifying influences of my spirit which I communicate,” *shall be in thee a well of living water springing up to everlasting life.* The light imparted to the understanding gradually encreases until the perfect day, and the principle of holiness implanted in the heart like leaven deposited in a measure

like the rallying point of the righteous in their respective countries and generations. But must we subscribe implicitly the articles of any man or class of men however respectable their talents, or eminent their usefulness? No : This were to prove ourselves unworthy of being considered the disciples of such teachers. In the great matters which involve our faith now, and our peace forever we must call no man master upon earth. Yet as these men were eminent patterns of purity and piety ; as their ministry was singularly countenanced of the divine spirit while they lived, and their writings have been instrumental in the edification of thousands and millions since they died, their authority ought not to be altogether disregarded. So far as they followed Christ, we are bound to imitate their example, and their doctrines which have been sealed on the souls of multitudes ought not hastily to be rejected.

of meal pervades the whole lump, until the christian is presented faultless before the divine glory with exceeding joy.

THIS change, as we already asserted, is not imaginary, but a great, a glorious reality : It is felt in the heart, and must be manifest in the conversation : It will discover itself to the individual and to others by producing *new joys, new aversions, new desires, new fears, new hopes.*—Sin that was once the man's delight he now regards with cordial abhorrence : the righteous whom he formerly treated with contempt he now esteems *as the excellent of the earth* ; and Jehovah, from whose presence he attempted to flee, he now approaches as his Father and friend. *Whom having not seen he loves, and in whom although he sees him not, yet believing, he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory* : His affections that formerly centred upon this world as his portion are now elevated to the purer joys of heaven. *He looks forward with anxious expectation for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, even his saviour Jesus Christ.* *If any man be in Christ, quickened together with him, he is a new creature : old things are passed away, and all things are become new.*

WOULD to God, brethren, that I could confidently address you all this day in the elevating language of the apostle, *You hath he quickened*

that were dead in trespasses and sins ; You that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works now hath he reconciled by the body of his flesh. But how shall I bless whom God hath not blessed ? Fidelity to my master, and friendship to your immortal interests constrain me reluctantly to declare, I stand in doubt of some of you : The indifference which one manifests about the great realities of eternity ; the worldly mindedness of another, the intemperance of another, and the profligacy of another, are mournful evidences that they are yet carnal ; that although they have a name to live they are yet spiritually dead. The grace of God teaches all its subjects to live soberly and righteously and godly in the world : All that are actually risen with Christ will seek those things that are above where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God.

As a mean of satisfying you as to your real standing in the sight of Jehovah, I propose the following interrogatories ; and, beloved brethren, I urge you in God's name to deal impartially with your own consciences, as you shall answer at his appearing and kingdom.

1. HAVE you obtained a deep, an impressive conviction of your poverty and wretchedness by nature ? You have often read in your bibles, *that as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse ; that the carnal mind is enmity*

against God ; that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked ; but the great question is, Have you really felt your condition to be such as the bible represents it ? Have you been constrained in agony of spirit to exclaim, “ Woe is me, for I am undone ; my sin is ever before me ; If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, I could not stand ? ” Has the light shone inwardly around your consciences, and your hearts, giving alarming discoveries of your exposure to wrath, and your utter inability to effect your own deliverance ? This question is *first* proposed, because a conviction of sin is the *first* operation of the divine spirit in the conversion of man : Although he is a sovereign Agent, and works differently on the different subjects of his grace, yet all are made sensible of their defilement and misery by nature. He shews the sinner the necessity of utterly *denying himself* ; he convinces him in the light of the holy law that his wisdom is folly, that his most perfect righteousness is merely guilt, that his holiest qualifications are the foulest pollution, that all his own excellence is deformity, and thus obliges him to ask with trembling Saul, “ Lord what wilt thou have me to do ? It is of thy mercy that I am not consumed.” I firmly believe that every sinner when savingly enlightened by the Holy Ghost will conceive himself to be the *chiefest of sinners* ; and the reason is obvious. He is more sensible of the hidden mystery of corruption in his own

heart, of its extreme pride, and deceitfulness, and enmity against God, than he can possibly be of the corruption of another. How ingenuous was the language of Agur ? Out of the abundance of the conviction of his heart his mouth makes a frank and open confession. *Surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man : I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy.*

2. WHERE, in the hour of spiritual distress, have you sought and obtained peace to your consciences ? Was it exclusively *in the blood of sprinkling* which sovereign wisdom and grace have provided, and which the gospel freely exhibits ? Real conversion is pronounced, *a turning to the strong holds*, that is to Jesus who is an impregnable, everlasting covert from every storm ; a fleeing for refuge to lay hold on this hope set before us : And the true circumcision are characterised, *as rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh*. This I propose as the second interrogatory, because this is the order exhibited in the heavenly oracles. The everlasting spirit is promised first to *convince the world of sin*, and afterwards *of righteousness*.— This divine Agent does not discover to the man his danger merely to produce an unnecessary alarm, or to *torture him before the time*. Infinitely more gracious are his designs. He makes him sensible of his disease, that he may apply the

remedy while it is offered : He shews him his guilt in its nature as repugnant to a holy, righteous law ; in its consequences as really exposing him to future punishment, that he may be constrained to improve that *blood which cleanses from all sin*, and which flows freely for his pardon in particular : He teaches the sinner that his situation is altogether desperate; that he is utterly and eternally undone in himself, that he may be persuaded to receive with grateful heart, and open arms, that Jesus who came for the salvation of *those that are lost* : Pause a moment, beloved hearer, and enquire, Have such been the operations of the gracious spirit upon thy soul ? When trembling under apprehensions of divine wrath, has he led thee to the saviour for relief ? Has he afforded thee some comfortable discoveries of Jesus as a complete mediator between thy guilty soul and an avenging God ? Has he enabled thee to plead his righteousness as an all-sufficient, everlasting foundation for thy hope ? Here, and here alone is thy soul resting for shelter from all the thunders of a broken law, and all the horrors of the wrath to come : Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength : In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory : The sinner, under this apprehension of his own misery, and the redeemer's suitableness, would not barter his hopes of salvation for as many worlds as there are drops of water in the ocean. He resolves with an emi-

ment christian and reformer, “ mine eyes shall behold nothing else, but this inestimable price, my Lord and Saviour Christ ; he ought to be such a treasure to me that all other things become like *dung* in comparison of him ; he ought to be such a light to me that when I have apprehended him by faith, I should not know whether there be any law, any sin, any righteousness, or unrighteousness in the world : What are all things which are in heaven and earth in comparison of the Son of God, Christ Jesus my Lord, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

3. Do you aspire uniformly and ardently after holiness of heart and conversation ? If any man be in Christ he is a NEW creature : *He is the workmanship of Jehovah the Spirit, created in Christ Jesus unto GOOD WORKS, which God hath before ordained that he should walk in them.* In regeneration the current of the soul takes an entirely different direction ; formerly it ran altogether in the channel of self, self-interest, self-gratification and honor, but now its course is directed spontaneously towards God, and heaven. There are many professors who talk much about the doctrines of free grace ; they glory in their gifts and attainments ; they manifest a furious zeal about the order of the church, and an intolerant spirit towards those who happen to differ

* LUTHER on Gal.

from them. But this is the principal part, I may add, the whole of their religion. It is like the flash of lightning which blazes and scorches for a time, and then evanishes. They can occasionally mingle with the profane; they can indulge themselves in the gratification of the flesh, and allow themselves in conversation not only wanton, but impure. These and other disorders they will attempt to cover with the sacred garb of concern for the honor of God, or the purity of his worship. Such professors may be *first* in their noise about religion; they may be *first* in their own estimation, but they will be *last* in the kingdom of heaven. *The tree is known by its fruit*, not by its blossoms and leaves, and the christian is distinguished from others not by the *high swelling pretensions, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we*, but by the meekness of his disposition; by the blamelessness of his walk, and the civility and chastity of his discourse. *He is created in Christ Jesus not only to good words, but to good works.* Grace in the soul is a living, operative principle, and teaches the individual to *live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world.* *The wisdom that cometh from above*, says an inspired apostle, is *first PURE*; it sanctifies the heart, and afterwards will be manifested by a holy edifying conversation; then *PEACEABLE*, as it gives to its subjects the blessed assurance of *peace with God*, it will incline them to *follow peace with all men*;

GENTLE and EASY TO BE ENTREATED, it renders the person mild, affable, obliging, ready to forgive an injury, “soft as the dews of heaven,” not furious as the hurricane, or boisterous as the ocean in a storm ; *full of mercy and good fruits* ; without PARTIALITY ; it leads him to respect the image of Christ wherever it is visible ; to esteem, as the excellent of the earth, the saints of the most high, whether they are clothed in purple, or in rags ; and without HYPOCRISY, it will profess no love either to God or man which it does not actually feel.

4. Who are the favorite companions of your lives ? Are those who manifest by their conversation that *they are born of God*, and are conscientious in keeping *all his commandments, and his ordinances blameless* ? Do you find a sacred pleasure in uniting with them in the various exercises of religion ; in reading over the great and precious promises ; in relating the joys or anxieties of your hearts ; in hearing the messages of life from the lips of his ambassadors, or in sealing your relation to him, and to them over the symbols of the saviour’s body and blood ? Are such exercises incomparably more refreshing to you than the empty amusements and conversation of an ungodly world ? *To the saints that are in the earth, was the appeal of the royal David, and to the excellent in whom is all my delight. I was glad when they said unto me, let us go into the*

house of the Lord : Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem. Perhaps there is no mark by which christians of every stage in the divine life, and amidst all their variety of frames may ascertain their character with greater certainty than this. All may not recollect with equal accuracy the time or the circumstances of their conversion ; all may not have attained to equal degrees of assurance that Jesus and his salvation are theirs ; all do not feel his love inflaming their hearts alike at all times ; the faith of the strongest is sometimes enfeebled ; the love of the most ardent occasionally languishes, and their hopes are obscured ; yet all may be able to determine who are the companions of their choice ; and what conversation is most their delight. *I am a companion of all them that fear thee*, was the unfeigned attestation of one ; another confidently asserts, *By this we know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.*

ARE any, after a deliberate, impartial examination of themselves, obliged to conclude that they are yet without the grace of God, what should be their conduct ? Must they *fold their arms*, and draw the desperate conclusion, “ There is no hope ; we have followed strangers, and after them we will go : Our harvest is past, our summer is ended, and we are perished from the Lord ? ” Thanks be to a forbearing God, that although you are dead in sin there is yet hope in

Israel concerning you : *With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.*—Be convinced of your danger, and *turn to the strong holds while you are prisoners of hope.* Is there no room for despair, there is none for presumption. *He that being often reprov'd, and hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy :* And are not your own consciences witnesses that you have been *often, often reprov'd ;* reprov'd by the word of God, by his spirit, by his mercies, by his judgments ; by the *very stork in the heavens which has known her appointed time, the crane, the turtle and the swallow :* You have been reprov'd again, and again, by your very acquaintances around you : Their diligence in providing for their perishing bodies is a constant rebuke to you for neglecting your immortal souls ; their anxiety in making provision for time is an awful admonition to your unconcern about a *never, never ending eternity.* *Let sinners in Zion be afraid, lest the Lord God cut short his work in righteousness, and seal the decree, Let them alone ; why should they be stricken any more ;* why should I strive with them by my word, by my spirit, by my providence ; *they are joined to their idols, and let them deliver them in the day of mine anger.* Although delays are dangerous, there is ample, infinite encouragement for all who seek salvation with humility and perseverance. *Ask, and it shall be given ; seek and ye shall find ; knock and it shall*

be opened unto you. Are you dead in trespasses and sins, there is a promise of spiritual life : The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live : I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them : Are you ignorant, there is a promise of saving instruction, It is written in the prophets, they shall be all taught of God ; I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord : Are your hearts enmity against God and his laws, there is a promise of a divine and gracious change, A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you ; I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. Meditate on these promises ; apply them to your own circumstances in particular, and then earnestly supplicate, Lord be merciful to me, a sinner ; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon my slain, that they may live. O, brethren, your all is at stake, and that forever, be not unconcerned : Unless you are born again, better for you ten thousand times that you had never been born ; or born among the heathen where the saviour is unknown. Could I conceive of any argument from the law with its terrors, or the gospel with its allurements ; from the loving kindness of Jehovah, or from his wrath ; from the compassions of that saviour who purchased, or that spirit who applies the redemption of calvary ; from heaven with its ceaseless glories, or hell with

its exquisite, unending torments ; could I conceive any argument that might be a mean of rousing you to reflection, my conscience bears me witness, that I would most willingly employ it : But it is neither *by might, nor by power, but by the spirit of the Lord of hosts*, and to his sovereign blessing I now commend you. In order to impress this truth upon your minds, I again repeat it, YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN. It is as if an angel spoke ; nay, a voice infinitely more august than that of angels has uttered the declaration. AMEN.



Sermon XII.

The Holy Ghost the great Agent in our regeneration, and his mercy illustriously manifested in that work.



EPHESIANS, ii. 4, 5.

BUT GOD WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US ; EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST.

THE generous mind entertains a grateful recollection of benefits received ; and the more valuable such benefits are, the more unexpectedly they are communicated ; and the more distinguished the person who bestows them, the receiver will feel stronger emotions of gratitude. It affords him a secret satisfaction occasionally to contemplate the gift, and then to acknowledge the bounty of him who imparted it. This principle of gratitude, which is common to us as men, operates with peculiar force in the bosom of the christian. Ten thousand considerations occasionally rush upon his mind, exciting his love and praise to the author of his salvation. When he contemplates the wretched-

ness of his natural estate, the privileges which he now enjoys by adopting grace, and those inconceivably greater mercies which are reserved for him in heaven ; when with these he connects, in his own reflections, the immense expense at which they were obtained, he is lost in astonishment ; he asks in unfeigned gratitude of spirit, *What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits towards me ?* He delights to aggravate his former impieties that the lustres of divine mercy, in calling him to glory and virtue, may appear more illustrious. *I am the least of the apostles*, is the acknowledgment of one, *that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God, but I obtained mercy ; his grace was exceeding, abundant, with faith and love which was in Christ Jesus.* Such were those grateful emotions which dictated the verses that are chosen for your consideration. *But God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us ; even when we were dead in sins hath quickened us together with Christ.*

WE lately attempted to illustrate the change here expressed *by quickening us together with Christ* : We endeavored to prove from scriptural testimony that, in the accomplishment of this work, the understanding is divinely enlightened ; the will is effectually subdued ; the inclinations are purified and directed to spiritual objects, and the very body under the controul of the sancti-

fied spirit becomes an instrument of righteousness unto God. *Old things are passed away, and all things are become new.*

FOLLOWING the same word as our rule, and relying on the same spirit for assistance, we design to prove that the author of this change is Jehovah, and that it is effected *to the praise of the glory of his grace.*

THAT God alone can be the author of our regeneration is evident, when we consider,

1. THE situation of man previous to this change. *He is without strength, and not only without strength, but dead in trespasses and sins.* Can the man who is naturally dead perform of himself any natural action? Can he command the living principle to enter his lifeless body, and rise and walk by his own power, when he is altogether without power? Equally incapable is the man who is spiritually dead to perform any spiritual action; to love God, to aspire after holiness, or answer in any degree the great end of his creation. Again, he is represented not only as *without strength* to please God, but *enmity the most irreconcilable against him*, and his righteous ways. *Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually.* Now, can it be supposed that we will voluntarily turn to an object which is cordially abhorred, or will we obey

those commandments which are *holy and just and good*, when our inclinations are *evil, only evil, and that continually* ? We are taught by another infallible author, *that the carnal mind is enmity against God ; that it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.* This single testimony is sufficient to establish the doctrine of human impotency beyond the shadow of doubt. *The carnal mind*, the mind of the flesh, of man while he remains under the dominion of his fleshly, depraved disposition is *enmity against God*, and as a natural consequence, *it is not subject to the law of God* ; we will not obey him whom we despise and abhor ; it is not possible that we can offer Jehovah our supreme affections, when our hearts are swelling with hatred against him ; *neither indeed can be.* Man labours under an absolute, moral incapacity of loving God, or yielding obedience to his commandments. The understanding is covered with darkness, and therefore has no apprehension of his excellencies ; the heart is completely estranged from him, and the will like *an iron sinew* obstinately refuses submission to his authority. The apostle's conclusion therefore is not more mournful than true, *They that are in the flesh cannot please God* ; or that challenge of the prophet, *Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots ? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.*

2. THAT this change must be the work of Je-

hovah is evident from the various characters by which it is expressed in scripture. It is called a *regeneration, and a new creature*. Can man create himself naturally? Is he capable of causing the *bones to grow*, and to use the prophet's language, of commanding *the sinews and the flesh to cover them*, and afterwards the life to enter them? Is he unable to add *one cubit to his bodily stature*, or render *one hair white or black*, he can much less be the author of his existence; and if he cannot be the author of his natural, how can he become the author of his spiritual and immortal being? Again, it is described by *opening the eyes of the blind; unstopping the ears of the deaf, and causing the dumb to sing*. Are either, or all of these prodigies within the sphere of human effort? Can man by all his ingenuity or all his ability give the organ of sight to him who was born blind, or the organ of hearing to him who is deaf, or enable *the dumb to speak plainly*? The exquisite artist may execute a likeness of the human frame, and admirably imitate its various members, but can he afterwards give life to his painting, causing it to see, and hear and articulate speech? If he cannot form the outward, how can he form the inward intellectual eye? Is he unable to qualify the body for beholding the sun, how can he *open the eyes of the understanding to contemplate the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ*? The sinner in this change is also represented as *raised to newness of life; as putting off*

the old man, and putting on the new man, also as called out of darknefs into marvellous light. All these passages confidered either feparately, or together prove that the finner's conversion is a work infinitely beyond his own power, and can only be accomplifhed by an Agent omnipotent and divine; that he is born not of blood, nor of the will of the flefh, nor of the will of man, but of God;

ADD to this,

3. THAT the Lord God explicitly challenges this work as his peculiar prerogative. *After thofe days, faith Jehovah, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts; and I will be merciful to their unrighteoufnefs, and their fins, and their iniquities will I remember no more.* This paffage is peculiarly inſtructive for the confirmation of our doctrine. In it the great God claims the conversion of a finner to be his own work no lefs than his pardon; he teaches us that as he the fovereign of the univerfe has the excluſive right of forgiving the tranfgreffions of a finner, he only has the prerogative and the power of raiſing him from death to life. *A new heart alfo will I give you, and a new ſpirit will I put within you; and I will take away the ſtony heart out of your flefh, and I will give you an heart of flefh. To crucify the old man, or take away the heart of ſtone, and give an heart of*

flesh, an heart susceptible of spiritual and heavenly influences he here claims as his office and his glory.

Again, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he hath saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* In this verse the inspired

apostle disclaims altogether the efficacy of means ; he asserts that they have no virtue in themselves for imparting life to the dead, neither do we by all our diligence in attending them lay the most high under an obligation to bless us : *It is not by our works of righteousness, but according to his own mercy that he saves us :* as he only possesses the power of quickening the dead, it is owing to the exceeding riches of his grace that he exerts this power on any sinner of the human family.

Time would fail to enumerate all those instances in which this work is ascribed immediately to Jehovah as its author. *The Man whose name is the Branch, he shall build the temple of the Lord ; and he shall bear the glory : Not by might, or by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts : He that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of his spirit. He hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*

The Holy Ghost who, in the economy of redemption, is immediately the efficient in regeneration is denominated *the spirit of faith ; the spirit of love ; the spirit of life ; the spirit of light ; the spirit of repentance ; the spirit of holiness, and*

of glory : he is also denominated the spirit of grace, because every gracious principle is produced in the heart by the exceeding greatness of his power.

IN the first communication of spiritual life this adorable Agent sometimes works without means ; he breathes immediately upon the soul of the sinner, commanding him *to live. I will work and none shall let it.* A holy God thus affords a display both of his sovereignty and omnipotence ; he manifests a complete independence of every external cause and shews that he can execute his gracious designs in such manner as his good pleasure may dictate. Saul was savingly apprehended on his road to Damascus, and the thief shortly before he expired on the cross, without the intervention of any means. By such instances the spirit Jehovah steps out of his ordinary course, and shews that all souls are in his hand, and at his disposal ; that he can easily enlighten the most blind, alarm the most secure, soften the most obdurate, and level the towering pride of the most stout-hearted, without deriving any aid from ordinances. *He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.*

BUT although the divine spirit occasionally calls the sinner without the use of means, it is not his ordinary method. He usually confers on his own word the honor of being the visible in-

strument of converting the soul to himself. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.* With this candle the Lord the spirit enters the sinner's heart ; he gives him an alarming discovery of his deformity, and danger, and rouses him from his spiritual slumbers. *When the commandment came sin revived and I died.* By the powerful application of the law in its terrors, he convinces the man that he is undone in himself ; and drives him absolutely to despair of salvation without higher relief. *The word of God,* thus omnipotently applied, becomes *quick and powerful, and sharper than a two edged sword ; a discernor also of the thoughts and intents of the heart ;* it explores the darkest recesses of the sinner's mind, and convinces him that his most secret thoughts are contrary to the holy law, and expose him to its vengeance. The gospel is afterwards employed as a mean of his consolation, and hope. In this celestial light the awakened, trembling sinner beholds Jehovah reconciled, and *reconciling the world unto himself ;* in it he discerns the saviour's blood as a real and everlasting atonement for human guilt, and is encouraged to improve it for his own remission. *Unto us are given exceeding great and precious promises that by them we might be partakers of a divine nature.* These are like the medium through which saving light is conveyed to the understanding, and rich, everlasting consolation to the heart. *As by the law is the knowledge of sin,* by the gospel is the know-

ledge of righteousness. By these he discovers to the objects of his mercy both their disease, and their remedy, and *turns them from darkness to light, that they may receive the inheritance of eternal life.* Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth; Born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by, through the instrumentality of the word of God, *which liveth and abideth forever.* Thus the Lord God in the very first production of this immortal principle usually employs his own word either read or preached. *Faith cometh,* it is originally produced and afterwards perfected, *by hearing and hearing by the word of God.* The Lord opened the heart of Lydia that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul, and while Philip was preaching Jesus, the eunuch believed and went on his way rejoicing. By ordinarily using the ordinances of his own appointment he stamps a majesty on these ordinances; he establishes a connection between the means and the end, and he admonishes us to aim at *making our calling sure by attending with diligence each divine institution.* Although it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure; we ought nevertheless to work out our salvation by an ardent, unwearied attention to every mean of conversion. While a single ordinance of Jehovah is willfully neglected, it is presumption either to ask or expect his blessing.

BUT whether the soul is savingly *quicken*ed with, or without the use of means, the Lord God in this act displays the most unmerited, abundant mercy. To establish this doctrine, was our third proposition, and to this your attention is now invited.

THE apostle is seemingly at a loss for language to express the emotions of his mind while he contemplates the condescension of Jehovah, displayed in this work. He represents him as not only *merciful*, but *exceedingly, abundantly merciful*.—*God who is rich in mercy* ; he considers him as not only exercising *love*, but *great love* : There is, as if he had declared, there is a depth of condescension ; a richness, a plenitude of mercy ; an ardour, an immensity of love manifested in our spiritual resurrection which can neither be uttered nor conceived : It infinitely surpasses all that is tender in the compassions : all that is ardent in the love of mortals, and is immeasurable as that God who exercises it.

THIS *mercy* appears *rich*, and this *love* appears *great*, if we consider,

1. THE deformity of man, when God the Holy Ghost takes possession of his heart. Objects the most unsightly, the most offensive in creation are employed to express its pollution and wretchedness : It is compared to an *open sepulchre*, emitting a

smell impure and loathsome ; to a *whited sepulchre*, which, however specious externally, is *within full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness* ; to a putrid *carcase*, an object abhorrent and offensive to the senses of every beholder. It is pronounced the haunt of *evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, false-witnesses, and blasphemies*. Thus impure, thus loathsome is the human heart when the Eternal Spirit graciously enters, adorns it with the beauties of holiness, and consecrates it a living *temple for himself*. Astonishing condescension ! Should an earthly prince enter the humble cottage ; should he converse familiarly with its mean inhabitants, and afford every mark of affection, we would admire his humility : Should he, stooping a grade lower, enter the dreary dungeon, compassionate some miserable convict, loose off his chains, tenderly wash his stripes, and adorn him with a princely robe, his condescension must excite still greater astonishment. But ten thousand times greater are the compassions, and condescension of the divine spirit, in stooping to dwell in the human heart. It is inconceivably more impure and loathsome than any prison upon earth, and he is a Being infinitely more exalted than any potentate or prince.

THE *mercy* of God the spirit appears *rich*, and his *love* appears *great*, when we consider,

2. THE immense opposition which is made a-

gainst his admission into the heart. He enters the sinner not only when lying in the midst of his pollutions, but when he is making every possible resistance. What artifices does he employ in order to defeat the operations of this divinely gracious agent? At one moment *he grieves the spirit of God* by postponing the great work of salvation. When the Holy Ghost affectionately entreats, *To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts : Now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation*, the sinner indolently asks, *a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands to sleep* : When the Holy Ghost employs the language of terror, and asserts, *He that being often reprov'd and hardeneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed ; Now, therefore, be not mockers, lest your bands be made strong* ; the sinner, in hardihood of spirit, replies, *I shall have peace though I walk in the imagination of mine heart : To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant*. Again, he often grieves the gracious spirit by questioning the freedom of the Father's love, and the efficacy of the redeemer's sacrifice which he is appointed to testify : or by quenching every serious impression *in the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires of other things*. But notwithstanding all this insult and opposition, the Holy Ghost in the immensity of his long-suffering *waits to be gracious* : He knocks again and again, at the door of the sinner's heart ; he uses

argument after argument, urging him to return and live. Now he presents the law with its thunders and lightnings as a mean of alarming his fears ; then he makes his appeal to his hopes by addressing him in *the still, small voice* of reconciliation : Thus he patiently waits for days and months, and years ; he submits to a thousand insults, and answers a thousand objections, until at last by his almighty energies he forces his way into the heart, and there abides for ever.—

Lord, what is man that thou art thus mindful of him, or the son of man that thou dost thus regard him ? That thou shouldst stoop to enter the heart defiled and debased by sin is a mark of condescension the most wonderful ; but that thou shouldst enter it amidst such provocation is a display of *long-suffering*, both astonishing and infinite : It is because *thou art God and not man, that we are sealed to the day of redemption*, and not to final reprobation.

THE *mercy* of Jehovah the spirit appears *rich* to those whom he effectually calls, and his *love* appears *great*, when we consider,

3. THAT many others equally deserving are suffered to perish in their unbelief and opposition. Perhaps thousands who, in all respects, were as promising as they ; whose dispositions were as amiable by nature ; whose opportunities, both private and public, were no less favorable, are

altogether passed by, while they are brought to participate in all the privileges of grace and glory. Amidst the same outward means, *one is taken and another left*; one is savingly quickened, and interested in *the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with eternal life*, while another, not more worthless by nature or practice, is permitted to go on in his transgressions. *Who maketh such to differ*, who were perhaps born in the same family, and reared up under the same means of salvation? It is the Lord the spirit; and why does he make them thus to differ from each other? Because *it seemeth good in his sight, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*. He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and seals them by his influences to the day of redemption; and *whom he will he hardeneth*, by withholding that special grace which he is not bound to impart. This should be a never failing source of admiration and gratitude to all who are partakers of the Holy Ghost: They ought often to reflect, and reflect with ever encreasing wonder and praise, that they *themselves were once foolish and disobedient*, until called by divine grace.

THE mercy of Jehovah appears rich, and his love appears great, when we consider,

4. THAT he was under no obligation to renew or sanctify the soul. By our original apostacy from God, we have rendered ourselves altogether

er unworthy of his blessing, and to this original guilt we have added actual crimes without number. We have often quenched his secret emotions by the enmity and hypocrisy of our hearts, and have also despised the open operations of his hand. *His goodness has not led us effectually to repentance*, neither have his judgments alarmed us to flee from the wrath to come. We have especially *done despite to the spirit of grace*, by not believing his testimony concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, or accepting that salvation which he comes to apply. It is therefore of his great mercy that we are not given up to blindness of mind, and impenitence of heart; how much more is it of his mercy that we should be constituted *heirs of God*, and enjoy the earnest of future glory? In his divine long-suffering he passes by the innumerable transgressions of his chosen, he gives them repentance *towards God*, faith *towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, love *to all the saints*, as their brethren and sisters by adopting grace; he cherishes within them every holy and heavenly disposition, and at last prepares them in his abundant mercy for the promised, purchased inheritance. There they will celebrate with ever expanding hearts and unceasing songs, the *exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards them through Christ Jesus*; they will cordially and everlastingly acknowledge, that according to his mercy *he saved them by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*.

LET the heirs of salvation learn from this doctrine, to realise their obligation to the Eternal Spirit who is the spirit of all grace and consolation. We justly adore the sovereign love of the Father who pitied our miseries, and *laid our help on one that is mighty* : We extol the compassions of the son who engaged in the arduous work ; who veiled the glories of his godhead in the frailties of human nature, and became, at the expence of his own blood, a propitiation for our sins : Equally great are our obligations to the mercy and condescension of the co-eternal spirit. He enlightens in the glorious mysteries of salvation the understanding which was altogether blind ; he softens and subdues to the obedience of faith the heart which was impenetrable as the flinty rock ; he raises to spiritual life the soul which was chilled with the horrors of eternal death ; he takes off the chains, and brings into the liberty of a son the devoted slave of corruption and hell ; he visits us when we are *lying in our blood*, covered over with all the pollution of our nature and lives ; ignorant of our wretchedness, and unconcerned about a remedy, he compassionates our miseries, *he saith unto us live, and his time is a time of love*. Christian, had it not been for his undeserved, preventing goodness, thou must have remained to this hour, and for ever *without God and without hope*. Had he not opened thine eyes, thou hadst never been sensible of thine own deformity, or the saviour's

transcendent excellence and suitableness : He omnipotently drew, before thou couldst feel either inclination or ability to embrace him as *thy beloved*, or run the way of his *commandments*. Pause occasionally and admire ; and whilst thou art admiring adore the sovereignty of his love, that when *many wise men, and mighty and noble* ; perhaps a neighbor, a brother, a sister, are yet left in *the bond of iniquity, and children of wrath*, the spirit of God and of glory hath rested upon thee : Pause again, and admire, and whilst thou art admiring adore the immensity of his love, that when thou didst long and obstinately resist his admonitions, he long and patiently waited to be gracious, and at last anointed thee a *king and a priest* to the everlasting Father. Blessed be thine eyes for they see, and blessed, eternally blessed be the spirit of grace through whose operations they were brought to see such glory in Jesus, and his salvation. *It is he that hath saved and called thee with this holy calling*. Dost thou occasionally experience some freedom in prayer, pouring out thy heart before the Lord ; some fervor of love, *joying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ* ; some enlargement in spiritual discourse, or in the exercises of the sanctuary, be secretly mentioning to his praise, *He that hath wrought me for this self same thing is God the sanctifier* : “ To thee, thou spirit of adoption, to thee I am indebted for all that peace of conscience ; for all those assurances of the

Father's love ; for all those lively hopes of immortality which often refresh and elevate my heart in this world of corruption and sorrow : Thou hast given me the first fruits in grace, and on thy faithful promise I rely for receiving the full harvest in glory. O seal me more and more sensibly unto the day of complete redemption." " Let no shoutings be heard," as a very enlightened, affectionate preacher* of righteousness exhorts, " let no shoutings be heard in your souls, while God is rearing up the divine temple, but those of grace, grace both in the foundation and superstructure till he comes to the top-stone. Your breathing after God is but the effect of his breathing upon you ; the moon hath no light but what she derives from the sun ; nor any creature a spark of grace but what is received from the Father of lights. Were it not for divine grace, Saul had never been Paul, nor Peter a penitent, nor Mary a convert, nor Zachæus a christian, nor hadst thou ever been brought to the sweetness of a spiritual life, or advanced to the comforts of another world. Bless God, therefore, since had it not been for him, thou hadst never been humbled, never been renewed, never reached so high as one holy desire, or a penitential tear, but lain till this day, and forever be-mired in fallen nature."

2. THIS doctrine may also be applied to those

* CHAR. on *reg.* Vol. ii. 225.

who are yet strangers to divine grace ; it admonishes them not to *grieve the Holy Ghost*, but diligently to improve every mean which is appointed for the conversion of souls. It is the conclusion of some that because they cannot give efficacy to the ordinances of God, and thus completely *work out their own salvation*, they need not *work* at all ; “ there is no use,” they argue, “ in *striving* when they know not whether they shall succeed.” But this is a conclusion both unreasonable and dangerous. We can as easily give success to the means in spiritual things, as in natural things ; we can as easily cause the incorruptible seed, the word of salvation to take root in our hearts, and spring up to life everlasting, as we can make the natural seed to foment in the ground and afterwards spring up, presenting *its blade and ear and ripened corn* : but does any rational husbandman conclude that because he cannot secure a harvest he will therefore cease from sowing ? No, he diligently uses every mean, and the more precarious the crop may appear, the more careful is he in embracing every method which is calculated to ensure it ; he industriously prepares the soil, chooses the best seed, attends to every thing respecting it in the most favorable season, and then fences it around securing it from external injury. Is any patient when he employs the means of recovery certain that they will be effectual for that end, and yet does he decline the use of the means ?

Does he not call for a physician, does he not ask his advice, does he not follow his directions, and, if one medicine is unsuccessful, does he not make the experiment of another, while there remains a possibility of his restoration to health? Is not the promise to the diligent use of means as absolute in things spiritual as in things natural? Is it more positively declared, *the hand of the diligent maketh rich*, than it is declared *every one that asketh receiveth*; *Faith cometh by hearing*: *It pleases God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*; *On the mountains of Zion*, that is, in the gospel church, *the Lord commandeth the blessing, even life forevermore*? Why then are we encouraged by a mere *peradventure* in things which concern the present life, and not in things which concern the life to come? It can only be ascribed to the absolute blindness of the human mind; it is not impressed with the importance of things spiritual and eternal; and to the enmity of the heart against God; it spurns the idea of submission to his authority. To the sinner roused from his security, and impressed with the importance of his everlasting concerns, the consideration that his *salvation must be of God* is the very reason why he will attend on those ordinances in which salvation may be expected; this will render him more earnest in waiting where the presence of Jehovah is promised, and more afraid of provoking him to depart; If we are unable to believe, or repent, ought we not more

entirely to depend on that adorable Spirit who is *the author of faith and repentance*, and who is graciously promised to them that ask him. As you regard your peace in time, and your happiness forever, *grieve not the spirit of God by whom alone you are sealed to the day of redemption*, but earnestly comply with all his entreaties. Does he proclaim, *Now is the accepted time : now is the day of salvation*, dare not to postpone the all important work another hour, but *seek and secure FIRST the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof ; take no sleep to your eyes, no ease, no contentment to your minds until you obtain reconciliation with Jehovah through our Lord Jesus Christ ; with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption*, endeavour to make this redemption your own by a particular appropriating faith : Does the Holy Ghost testify that, *there is no salvation in any other than Jesus Christ, and that if ye believe not on him ye must die in your sins*, renounce immediately every other refuge ; cleave to his sacrifice, his righteousness, his covenant, his promises as your only confidence. Thus saith the Lord God, *behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a sure foundation, and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed*. Does the Holy Ghost exhort, *to strive that ye may enter in at the strait gate ; to give all diligence to make your calling and election sure ; it becomes you to shake off without delay your spi-*

ritual sloth ; to stir up your souls and all within you to seek the Lord, and attend with the utmost earnestness every ordinance which he has appointed for your instruction and salvation ; does the Holy Ghost assert *that a man is not profited, should he gain the world and lose his soul*, be admonished then to consider your salvation as the great business of life, as entitled to your earliest thoughts in the morning, and your latest thoughts in the evening ; let the impression reign supreme in your minds that if your souls are lost, your all is lost, and that forever. While you attend the various means of salvation be importunate in supplicating the blessing of this divinely gracious Agent. Are you ignorant, *he is the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*, and can effectually enlighten your darkness ; are you without strength, he is the *spirit of power and of might*, and can therefore easily give *strength to the weak and life to the dead* ; Have you been wilfully *enemies to God*, and thus forfeited every claim to his blessing, he is *RICH in mercy to all that call upon him* ; his grace has appeared *exceeding abundant* in calling *blasphemers, and persecutors, and injurious persons* ; Have you again, and again, resisted his most gracious entreaties, *he yet waits to be gracious, his arm is not shortened that it cannot save*, plead therefore that it may be *made bare* for your salvation ; *his ear is not heavy that it cannot hear*, pray mightily that he would arise

and have mercy on you : ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands have been *washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the spirit of our God*, and the promises are yet as free, the covenant is yet as full, the door of mercy is yet as open as in generations past.

I CANNOT conclude this exercise in language more appropriate, or more affectionate than that of the great apostle : *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory may give you the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of him : The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance among the saints.* AMEN, and AMEN.

Sermon XIII.

The Christian's certain Progress to Perfection;



JOB, xvii. 9.

THE RIGHTEOUS ALSO SHALL HOLD ON HIS WAY.

AN inheritance, however valuable, if held by a precarious title, affords little happiness to the possessor. The apprehension that it may be suddenly wrested from him is often preying upon his mind, and tends to diminish the enjoyment, even while it remains in his possession. But it is the christian's consolation and glory, that whatever he holds, he holds it unalienably and everlastingly. *This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his son :* With him as their trustee it is deposited and secured, without even the possibility of being lost. The believer's inheritance is reserved in heaven for him, and he, although on earth, is safely kept for this inheritance ; he possesses a written charter for all his privileges, and this charter is drawn up by one who will not deceive ; by one upon whose wisdom no artifice can impose, and whose designs no malice can defeat. *He is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* The christian, although feeble in himself ; although encompassed by innumerable adversaries, both

artful and vigilant ; although he *has an evil heart of unbelief* which often leads him astray, yet perseveres invisibly and invincibly to glory. *The righteous also shall hold on his way.*

THE persons, whose progress is here secured, are denominated *righteous*. They are not so naturally, because *there is not a just man on earth that doeth good and sinneth not* : They are all gone out of the way ; they are together become unprofitable ; all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. They who are now heirs of God, and of glory, were as really heirs of wrath by nature, as those who perish for ever. But they become *righteous* through the righteousness of the infinite surety freely imputed by the Father. *They are justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.* The obedience and blood of Jehovah incarnate is that righteousness with which they are all adorned, and it is this which constitutes their exclusive title to everlasting life. Their justification does not at all depend on any grace imparted to them, or any good works performed by them, but wholly on that obedience which Jesus their sponsor performed in his life, and on that sacrifice which he offered on the cross. *We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the atonement.* The ransomed of the Lord are also righteous internally by the grace of the Holy Ghost communicated to them. *They are born*

of water, and of the spirit : They put off the old man with his deeds, and put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness, and true holiness. This inward principle of grace they manifest by purity of life and conversation. Being renewed in the spirit of their mind, they have their fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.— Although this grace communicated to the heart, and good works manifested in the life, constitute no part of our justifying righteousness, yet there is no salvation without them. *To them only who by patient continuing in well-doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life shall be rewarded.* All who are *righteous* through the saviour's merits imputed, are also rendered *righteous* through his grace actually imparted ; by the former they obtain a legal title to the celestial inheritance, by the latter they are qualified for the actual enjoyment of that inheritance.

THIS text obviously teaches us that none who are thus *righteous* can possibly be lost, but that they shall be enabled to persevere unto the end ; and to this they are secured—

1. By the eternal and unalterable appointment of God the Father. This purpose of God is first mentioned, because it is the origin, the moving cause of our salvation and infallibly secures the communication of all other blessings both in grace, and glory. The love of Jehovah

having once centered upon the soul remains unchanged, and unchangeable forever ; it necessarily issues in the fruits of *faith*, of *repentance*, of *holiness* in this world and of *eternal life* in the world to come. *All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me ;* “ all that were ordained to life in the sovereign, unsearchable counsels of God shall actually come to me ; they shall approach me as their saviour, and hope ; they shall rejoice in me as their beloved and friend ; and once united to my Person they shall be kept by my power to salvation,” *for him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out ;* “ I will on no conceivable, no possible considerations reject or disown them ; I will never recal that sentence of pardon which was passed in their behalf, nor exclude them from my dear family into which they were adopted.” But as Jesus the Mediator is constrained by his own love to his redeemed to keep them from falling, he is obligated, if the language may with reverence be used, he is obligated also by the sovereign decree of his righteous Father. *And this is the Father's will which hath sent me ;* “ this is the Father's WILL, his gracious pleasure, his absolute, immutable determination and appointment,” *that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing.* Is it possible that any truth could be expressed in language more undeniable and strong ? *It is his will that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing ; but raise it up at the last day.* The

righteous are no doubt dear to Christ as the purchase of his own blood ; it is impossible that he could lightly esteem those for whom he endured such reproach and suffering, and even death itself, but they are objects of his peculiar care not only as their redemption cost the effusion of his own blood, but as they were actually committed him in trust of the Father ; before one of them can fail of salvation he must be unjust to himself, who purchased them by the sacrifice of his life, and unfaithful to Jehovah who ordained him their covenant head. Their names were early written upon his *breast plate*, and their persons are now preserved by his almighty power. Such is the will of God with respect to his chosen, and may we not confidently assume that inspired challenge, *who hath or can resist his will ?* Can all the intrigue of earth or hell undermine the plans of infinite wisdom, or defeat the operations of almighty power ? Surely none who realise the perfections of God will doubt for a moment the truth of the declaration, *my Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* Again, *the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, this security, the Lord knoweth them that are his.* The eternal foreknowledge and the changeless purpose of Jehovah are the broad basis on which the building of redemption is reared up, and although the superstructure is great, even ten thousand times ten thousand and thou-

lands of thousands of living stones, the foundation is fully equal to its support ; and as no blast can possibly shake the basis, none can shake the building, because every stone in this celestial fabric he, whose name is Jehovah, carefully watches with his eye, and holds with his hand, *This is the seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his ;* He knows them by name, and by surname whom his sovereignty fore-ordained to glory, and his love, and faithfulness will see to the execution of his eternal purpose. This same argument the apostle mentions for his own spiritual consolation. *In hopes of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began.* The apostle expresses a confident expectation of a blessed immortality, and what was the foundation of his hope ? The purpose of God from eternity, and his truth which will certainly accomplish his purposes. *God that cannot lie had promised it before the world began,* and therefore he had strong consolation. Another text for the confirmation of this argument shall suffice. *Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his son that he might be the first born among many brethren ; and whom he did predestinate them he also called ; and whom he called them he also justified and whom he justified them he also glorified.* Here the various parts of our salvation, like so many links in one golden chain, are connected inseparably together ; all originating from, and established by electing love as the moving cause.

After he contemplates this truth, the inspired author indulges the animated, animating challenge, *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* He afterwards breaks forth in the language of confidence, and of transport, *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

2. THAT *the righteous shall hold on his way*, may be infered with equal certainty from that intimate relation which exists between them and Jesus the mediator. He is denominated the *great shepherd*, and they are *the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand*, and can we suppose that he will suffer the wolves of prey to enter his fold, and snatch the flock from his view, when he is able to prevent it? *I know my sheep and am known of mine, and I give to them eternal life and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* He is *the surety of a better testament or covenant*, and in that capacity has laid down the price of their redemption, and can we imagine that he will afterwards see them involved in condemnation? Will a surety, after the debt is fully paid, and the bond actually can-

celled, permit the debtor to be thrown into prison, and there languish for life? *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again.* How affectionately does the Son of God address them under this relation? What strong consolation does he minister to them from the consideration that he has actually suffered and satisfied in their room? *Thus saith the Lord, O Israel, fear not; for I have redeemed thee:* he recognizes them as his own by actual, costly purchase, and encourages them amidst all adversity whether temporal or spiritual. *I have redeemed thee;* "with a costly sacrifice I have obtained thy deliverance and paid into the hands of divine justice her utmost demand;" *I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.* He is called *the head over all things*, the church is his body, and every believer a living member of this body, and is it probable that he will permit his own members to languish and perish, when it is in his power to preserve them? *From whom,* that is from Jesus the living Head, *the whole body fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh encrease of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.* Here we learn that healthful influences are communicated from Jesus Jehovah to every part of his mystical body, which necessarily secures each member from spiritual disease or death. As the *Captain of our sal-*

vation he has engaged to bring *many sons and daughters to glory*, and will he deliberately behold his followers driven from the field, and shamefully defeated by their foes, when he can easily lead them on to victory and glory? *As the Captain of the Lord's hosts* he marches at the head of his spiritual soldiery; he waves the banner of his cross, and utters the triumphal shout, *Be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.* Again, he is entitled *the everlasting Father*, and in that endearing relation he not only sympathises with his adopted children in all their afflictions, but has actually provided an inheritance, and will he suffer them to be spoiled of this inheritance if he can possibly secure it? They are *begotten again to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled and that fadeth not away which is reserved in heaven for them*; it is reserved in heaven, and thither neither the hand of intrigue or violence shall ever reach to injure it. Such are the relations existing between our adorable Lord and his real followers; each of them ineffably endearing, and each of them an infallible security for their progress to perfection. The eternal Father who constituted this union has promised and sworn that it shall never be broken. *When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his*

hand ; he shall see of the travel of his soul and be satisfied. Jehovah the Father here considers him in the capacity of a surety, and on the condition of making his soul an offering for sin solemnly promises him a numerous offspring. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great—because he poured out his soul unto the death ;* Having exacted the full payment at the hands of his son, the Father promises him in return a spiritual seed as the reward of his humiliation.

3. THE progress of the righteous to perfection is secured by the inhabitation of the Holy Ghost. Where this almighty Agent once takes possession of the heart he never departs but remains as *a well of water springing up to everlasting life.* The spirit Jehovah has become by office the *spirit of holiness* because in the scheme of redemption he engaged to sanctify the election of grace ; he is also entitled the *Spirit of glory* as engaging to crown them at last with perfection and glory ; and being a divine Agent he is no less omnipotent to complete their sanctification than the Son to bring in a justifying righteousness. He is able as a God *to keep them from falling, and present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy :* and he has afforded every possible assurance that his power shall be exerted in their perseverance. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the*

day of Jesus Christ. As he is gracious to begin the good work in their translation from death to life, he is both gracious and faithful to carry it on amidst all opposition, and finally to consummate it in their complete restoration to the image of their father. Those spiritual principles which he produces in their hearts; their *love*, their *joy*, their *faith*, their *repentance* are called the *first fruits* being a pledge to the righteous that the *full harvest* shall certainly be enjoyed. They are also called *an earnest of our inheritance*, as they are not only a foretaste of those pleasures which are at God's right hand, but are an infallible security that these pleasures shall be enjoyed. *In whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession unto the praise of his glory.* Christian, let thy soul be comforted from these considerations, that He who has given thee grace will crown it with never ending glory. That light of the divine countenance which has beamed upon thee occasionally in the closet or the sanctuary is the dawn of a morning which will shine brighter and brighter until it issues in one cloudless, endless day.

4. THE perseverance of the righteous is also secured by the promises, the absolute promises, and oath of their covenant Jehovah. *I will make an everlasting covenant with them that I will*

not turn away from them to do them good. The Lord does not propose a covenant precarious in its nature ; one that shall depend on uncertain conditions, on duties which the creature may never discharge, or resolutions which he may never perform ; it is secured by the immutability of his purpose, and the omnipotence of his power ; *an everlasting covenant that I will not turn away from them to do them good ;* he here assures them that amidst all inward or outward changes his covenant should remain unchanged ; that as it existed from eternity with Jesus their representing head, it should continue inviolate through all the vicissitudes of time, and through the depths of eternity to come. But is the christian afraid that owing to the extreme treachery and wickedness of his own heart, he may utterly wander from God, and perish for ever, it is promised *I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me.* Although they may occasionally go astray, they shall not finally wander ; they shall be restored to his fold and *kept through faith unto salvation.* *The mountains may depart, and the hills may be removed ;* all other confidences may fail them ; their frames may often vary, and their resolutions yield before the violence of temptation, *but my kindness shall not depart from them, neither shall my covenant of peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy upon thee.* That same mercy, this inspired prophet assures them, that same mercy which had reigned in choo-

sing them, in redeeming them, in effectually calling them, should pursue them invariably thro' life, and crown them with endless felicity in the world to come. Again, *He that believeth on me hath everlasting life: Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.* Surely if we can draw any definite conclusion from language, we must conclude from these verses that none who are once united to the Son by a living faith, and through him interested in the favor of Jehovah can possibly perish. *He hath eternal life*; he is already possessed of it; he now holds the title, an indisputable, an unalienable title in virtue of the Surety's righteousness which he received by faith; he enjoys the *earnest, the first-fruits* in that assurance of the divine love, that peace of conscience, that joy in the Holy Ghost which he often experiences, and both these are an ample security that he shall attain the full possession of the purchased inheritance. But for our greater encouragement, and for the more astonishing display of his own condescension Jehovah in covenant has superadded his oath. *God willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.* We are not to conclude that the oath of God renders our

salvation more certain in itself ; his bare word is more stable than the everlasting hills, firm as the throne of his glory ; but he has interposed his oath for the more abundant satisfaction and consolation of his children ; although it does not in the least confirm the covenant on his part ; yet it is designed to confirm their faith and answer every objection which may arise in their hearts. *An oath for confirmation is an end of all strife among men*, as it is the strongest possible evidence of the truth of testimony delivered, and terminates all future contradiction, so the Lord God in condescension to our infirmities has afforded this additional solemnity ; he thus gives this most satisfactory and undeniable proof of the stability of his covenant, and of the future glory of all who have an interest in its blessings. Now, doubting, disconsolate christian, what greater evidence, that *it is thy Father's good pleasure to give thee the kingdom*, can thy soul either ask or imagine ? Thou hast not only his word, but his promise, and for thy stronger consolation even his oath, *that his kindness shall not depart from thee*, and is *HE* a man that he should lie ? *Hath he said that he will strengthen thee ; that he will help thee ; that he will uphold thee with the right hand of his righteousness, and will he not do it ; hath he spoken and sworn it ; and will he not bring it to pass ?* With all these high assurances of his good will, art thou not ready to appropriate the elevated challenge, *Who shall se-*

parate me from the love of Christ, or who shall resist my progress to his celestial kingdom?

5. THE perseverance of the righteous to perfection is secured by the constant, and ever prevailing intercession of our Lord Jesus Christ. *When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.* There he appears in behalf of his chosen, and infallibly applies that redemption which he accomplished on his cross. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life.* Was the sacrifice of Calvary divinely meritorious for the remission of sin, and our reconciliation to God, the life of this great High Priest in heaven, his advocacy in the nature of his people, and in their name is an infinite security for their final salvation. Are any accusations urged against them by the broken law, or satan, or their own consciences, he immediately presents his atoning blood; he thus answers every charge and secures them from condemnation. *If any man sin we have an advocate with the Father, even Jesus Christ the righteous who is the propitiation for our sins; Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, and also maketh intercession for us.* Is the spiritual soldier at any time assailed by the world, or the powers of

darkness, and in danger of being defeated, *this High Priest of our profession* seasonably interposes, he demands that new strength may be imparted; that every grace may be roused into vigorous exercise, and thus secures victory in their behalf. How affectionately did he proclaim to Peter in his hour of temptation, and thus affectionately does he feel towards thee, O believer, amidst all thy discouragements, and disquietudes, *I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; again, O righteous Father, I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.* He does not desire that the spiritual warrior should be immediately crowned with the laurel and the palm. Jesus is more glorified when his followers are enabled to keep the field in opposition to his and their adversaries. Are they frequently *afflicted, tossed with tempest after tempest and not comforted,* he intercedes for their consolation and support. *Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion on the child of her womb, yea she may, yet will I never forsake thee; I have graven thee on the palms of my hands, and thy walls are continually before me. I will pray the Father and he shall give you another comforter that he may abide with you forever.* Such is the solicitude which Jesus Jehovah, amidst all the glories of his exalted state, feels for his members on earth, and this forms another ground for their perseverance to perfection. *He is able to save them*

to the very uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. Amidst all afflictions, all imperfections, all temptations, believer in Jesus, thou hast an advocate with the Father, and while his atonement and intercession prevail, *thou shalt hold on thy way. Thy life is hid with Christ in God, and because he lives thou shalt live also ; new light, new strength, new consolation shall occasionally flow from this thy ever living head until thou hast attained the end of thy faith, even thy full salvation ; thy name is now written upon his breast-plate, and no intrigue, no power either of earth or hell shall ever be able to erase it.*

SUCH are our assurances that *the righteous shall hold on his way ;* and from this variety and lustre of evidence we may derive the strong consolation that not a *branch* of this *living vine* shall ever be broken off ; that not a *soldier* of this *Captain* can possibly be foiled in the field of battle ; that not a *sheep* once brought into the spiritual fold shall finally *wander and perish.*

LET the heirs of promise learn to triumph amidst all their conflicts and discouragements from the full assurance of victory in the end. Innumerable trials and difficulties must be expected, so that if it were possible the very elect should be lost. They have a mystery of iniquity within constantly warring against them, and exciting

them to depart from the Living God. *The flesh lusteth against the spirit*, and constrains them in bitterness of soul to exclaim, *who shall deliver from the body of this death* : they have countless temptations from without ; they are sometimes assailed by the allurements, and again by the persecution of the world ; and in addition to these they meet with apparent discouragements from a reconciled Father. In holy sovereignty, or as a correction for their untender walk, he withdraws the light of his countenance and leaves them altogether to doubt their interest in his love. The christian may often be compared to a ship in the ocean, driven alternately by the wind and the waves with little prospect of reaching the shore ; or to the soldier in the field of battle surrounded with legions of adversaries, each more vigilant and powerful than himself. *He wrestles not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickednesses in high places.* Thus he is often perplexed, but glory, glory to God, never in despair ; he is persecuted but never forsaken, he is in tribulation, but through all these tribulations and ten thousand others, should they happen, he shall enter the kingdom of his Father. Were all the men on earth, and all the legions of hell in combination against a single believer, and he the weakest, the most contemptible follower of Jesus, he might indignantly smile at their rage ;

he should obtain conquest after conquest in glorious succession until he placed his feet on the neck of his last enemy, and rising *more than a conqueror* should lift the voice of triumph, *thanks be to God that giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ: He is kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*, and therefore what other power can possibly interrupt his career? Every effort of man or angel to stop his progress would be more presumptuous, more vain than for a mortal arm attempting to stem the raging torrent, or to arrest the luminaries of heaven in their orbits. *The eternal God is his refuge*, he is therefore invulnerably shielded; *underneath and over and around him are the everlasting arms* he must therefore be *kept from falling*. David therefore exults, and all who have embarked on the same covenant, and confide on the same strength may freely appropriate the same language of exultation, *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me; Thou, O Lord art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head*. Nay, christian, relying on the skill, the fidelity, the omnipotence of thy Captain thou mayest venture to assume the bolder challenge, *the Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid? Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall*

not fear ; though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident.

2. DOES this doctrine afford consolation to the righteous, it may also instruct us in our duty. We ought to commit the work of our salvation to him who has undertaken, and who alone is able to accomplish it. As Jehovah is the *author*, he must also be the *finisher of our faith, and hope and joy*. As he first brings us into the paths of righteousness, it is He that must lead us in these paths until we reach the end of our course. The believer's *strength* is literally *to stand still*, and to depend on grace in the promise for discharging every duty, and vanquishing every adversary. The moment that we enter the field, and encounter the foes of our salvation on any thing without God, we must be driven back to the dishonor of our Captain, and our future mortification and shame. Peter, although an apostle of the Lamb, and bolder than his compeers in the cause of his Master, made an experiment of his own strength, and what was the consequence ? He denied his Lord ; he afforded new triumphs to the enemies of the cross ; he grieved the generation of the righteous, and laid the foundation for bitter remorse and humiliation to himself. That blissful throng, which have already *finished their course*, and seized the prize of immortality, *overcame by the blood of the Lamb ; they were more than conquerors through him that loved*

them, and would we desire to attain the same end we must use the same means. We must be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. The church is therefore emphatically represented as *coming up from the wilderness leaning upon her beloved* ; depending on him for the supply of every want, for comfort in all despondency, for light in all darkness and support in every difficulty and danger. *Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is :* All the Persons, all the perfections of Jehovah will with unremitting care watch over him through life, and at last secure him an abundant entrance into the regions of bliss.

LET none infer that the doctrine of our infallible progress to perfection encourages indolence or indifference on our part. Although the promises of our present perseverance, and final salvation are absolute, depending on no condition to be performed by us, this consideration will not justify us in the neglect of any ordinance : Although we are absolutely appointed to regeneration, to sanctification, and salvation, we are as really appointed to the use of the means, as to the attainment of the end. The Lord God has positively promised, *Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure* ; yet we do not expect to reap without sowing, nor to *gather where we have not strawed*. It is only through a course of industry, and care that outward blessings may be

expected. As in things temporal, so in things spiritual *it is the hand of the diligent that maketh rich.* Although it is declared, *the righteous shall hold on his way ; the meek also shall encrease their joy in the Lord ;* yet it is in a course of self-denial, of humble, holy obedience, of diligence in keeping all the commandments, and ordinances of God that we may look for salvation at last. Although Jesus Jehovah is the *author and finisher of our faith,* yet *faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God,* we ought therefore to attend with all earnestness the ministry of reconciliation : Although it is written, *they shall be all taught of God ; I will give them an heart to know me that I am the Lord,* yet this teaching is perfected by the scriptures as the great external mean ; *they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect ;* it becomes us therefore to be frequently searching the scriptures.— Although it is promised, *I will give to them eternal life and they shall never perish,* it is also added, *he that endureth to the end shall be saved : To them who by patient continuing in well doing seek for glory, and honor and immortality, he will render eternal life ;* we ought therefore to press eagerly toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Although Christ Jesus the Lord is able to keep us from falling, and it is explicitly promised, *that those who are begotten again shall be kept by his power through faith*

unto salvation, we are at the same time commanded, to be adding to our faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, with the assurance that in doing these things we shall never fall ; we shall enjoy an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ: We ought therefore to watch with all perseverance ; to have our loins girded about, our lights burning, and we ourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. O brethren, we lose much joy in prosperity, much consolation in adversity, much glorying in reproach, much boldness and confidence in death, by our spiritual indolence ; by being so much entangled with the affairs of this world, and abounding so little in the work of the Lord. Be exhorted therefore to lay aside every weight, and the sin which most easily besets you ; to put on the whole armor of God, and conduct in a manner worthy the soldiers of such a captain, and the candidates for such a prize ; to take the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God ; and, as the Lord lives, you shall attain the victory at last. Tribulation you may have, tribulations you shall have, but through all tribulations you shall enter the kingdom ; perplexed you may be, perplexed you shall be, but not in despair ; assailed you may be, assailed you shall be by principalities, by powers, by the rulers of the darkness of this world, but never defeated : Clothed with the armor of God, and strengthened

with power from on high, *you shall go on conquering and to conquer, until the blood of your last enemy has flowed and death itself is swallowed up in victory.*

Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy : To the only wise God our saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. AMEN.

Sermon XIV.

The Christian's future Felicity and Glory.



COLLOSSIANS, iii. 4.

WHEN CHRIST, WHO IS OUR LIFE, SHALL APPEAR, THEN SHALL YE ALSO APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY.

IT seems to be a general arrangement of Jehovah that almost every thing in the visible world attain to perfection by degrees. The natural day has its dawn, then its clearer light, before it arrives at the full effulgence of noon. The oak which now waves majestic on yonder mountain was once a small sapling, a slender shrub. The seed which is deposited in the earth presents *its blade*, then *its ear*, before *the ripened corn upon the ear* can be expected. As in the kingdom of nature, also in the kingdom of grace, perfection is attained by degrees : *In the garden of God the trees of righteousness* are of lesser, then of larger size, before they become fully grown and are fit to be transplanted to the paradise above. The babe born in the divine family passes through the various grades of childhood, and youth, before it arrives *to the stature of a perfect man*, and is admitted to the possession of the purchased inheritance. The

heirs of promise while they continue in this world are encompassed with infirmities, are chargeable with much imperfection, are subject to numerous reproaches, *but when Christ who is our life shall appear, then ye shall also appear with him in glory.*

You will readily notice that the apostle, with an apparent abruptness, changes the person. When he is speaking of Christ Jesus the Lord as *the life* of his chosen he includes himself in the number, *OUR life*. Although he was an apostle of the Lamb, endowed with eminent gifts and graces, unwearied in promoting the gospel of his master, and instrumental in *turning many to righteousness*, yet all his hopes for salvation rested on the same rock with those whom he addressed. He felt himself as really and as deeply indebted to *the mercy of God through our Lord Jesus Christ* as the lowest, or the most illiterate in that church to which his epistle was dedicated. It is not splendor of natural talent, it is not enlargement of gifts, it is not pre-eminence of office, nor even usefulness in the church which secures eternal life, but faith in the *Lamb that was slain*. Free grace through the redemption of Jesus Christ reigns alike in the salvation of those who *minister*, and of those *that are ministered unto*. Again, in proclaiming the future privileges of the righteous this inspired penman changes the person and asserts, *YE also shall appear with*

him in glory. The humble christian might be disposed to argue, “such prospects may indeed open to the view of a Paul, one who was an extraordinary officer in the church, who was eminently enlightened by the Holy Ghost, who had *laboured more abundantly* than others in winning souls to Christ, and as a mark of peculiar honor had been *caught up to the third heavens*, but such blessings are not in store for me ; I am the least of all saints ; I am not worthy to be numbered among the followers of Jesus now, nor to mingle in their joys hereafter.” For the encouragement of such this *Son of consolation* announces, Ye also, however low in your own estimation, or worthless in the estimation of others, *ye also shall appear with him in glory.* There is a mansion for every child in the spiritual family, and a *throne* for all *who overcome by the blood of the Lamb.* There is laid up for me a *crown of righteousness*, this same apostle asserts in another epistle, *which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day ; and not to me only, he adds, but unto all them that love his appearing.*

THREE truths, equally interesting and comfortable, are here presented for our discussion : The relation of Jesus Jehovah to his people, he is their life ; his future appearance in their behalf, and their exceeding glory on that occasion—

1. THE relation of Jesus Jehovah to his people, he is their *LIFE*.

It is not my intention to detain you at present with a particular discussion of this part of the subject ; yet, as a mean of bringing to your recollection truths which have been frequently taught, permit me to remark that the Eternal Son is denominated the life of his chosen, as he is their whole salvation ; as he is not only its commencement in this world, but its consummation in the world to come : He is their *life* being, in his undertaking and offices, the substance of all their privileges and all their prospects : he is the soul of all that peace, that joy, that transport which they frequently experience on earth, and of those endless and ineffable glories which are reserved for their fruition in heaven.

BEAR with me, dearly beloved, if I take the liberty of enlarging on this important subject, contrary to promise, as it is most intimately connected with all our comforts now, and our best hopes for eternity. Christ Jesus the Lord may be pronounced the *life* of his children, because through his spirit breathing omnipotently upon their hearts, they are raised from the death of sin to a life of holiness and glory ; through his blood sprinkled upon their consciences they are delivered from condemnation, and obtain the complete, irreversible forgiveness of their sins : *They*

are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot : Through the merit of this their divinely gracious sponfor they are fully accepted now, and become entitled to a kingdom hereafter : *Being justified by his grace, they are made heirs according to the hopes of eternal life.* Through his grace gradually communicated to their souls they are renewed and sanctified more and more ; they become dead to sin, alive to righteousness, and are at last prepared for that world where *God shall be all, and in all.* Out of his fullness they receive and grace for grace, one supply of grace in succession to another. Through his promises powerfully sealed upon their hearts by the spirit of promise, they enjoy at some precious seasons the assurance of their Father's love, and receive foretastes of those everlasting pleasures which are at his right hand : *In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.* By the energy of his all-creative voice, their bodies shall hereafter start from the bosom of corruption, and become partakers of a glorious immortality. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plague : O grave I will be thy destruction.* This relation between Jesus and his ransomed shall not cease then : After he has raised their bodies from the grave, and reunited the soul and body which had been long separated,

he will conduct them into the *palace of the King*, and make them joyful forever with the light of his countenance. Whether therefore we consider the regeneration of the righteous, their adoption, their reconciliation, their progress in grace, or their perfection in glory, Christ Jesus is emphatically their life; and in this character the heavens will shortly reveal him to their unspeakable joy : *Christ who is their life shall appear.*

Two appearances of the *great God our saviour* are mentioned in scripture : The first took place at his incarnation, and advent into our world. He then condescended to be clothed with our nature, and engaged, by suffering in our room, to obtain eternal redemption for us. *When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons.* Alluding to this event the apostle declares, *Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* But the appearance of the son announced in our text is widely different, and infinitely more august. It is his second and glorious manifestation at the consummation of all things. Formerly the Son as Mediator appeared in circumstances of outward poverty and meanness, but hereafter he will be revealed in all the pomp and magnificence of a God : At his former entrance into our world he appeared

as a feeble, helpless babe, *was made of no reputation and laid in a manger* ; but splendid beyond conception will be his second appearing. Not a manger will then be his residence, but *a throne ; a white throne ; a great white throne*, surpassing in splendor ten thousand suns : He will not then appear as a babe, small, helpless, requiring to be nursed by the arms of a mortal parent, but will be exhibited in all the grandeur of God Almighty ; his voice divine will pierce the caverns of the dead, will reanimate the ashes of all past generations, and his arm separate the nations from each other, as *a shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats* : Formerly he appeared in the character of a *servant* ; he was *set at naught*, he was arraigned at the bar of a mortal, he was *accused*, he was *condemned*, he was *crucified* ; but hereafter he will be revealed in the majesty of a judge, and pronounce an unchanging sentence on the countless myriads of angels and men : Formerly he was introduced by *the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God*, and a few unlearned, despised fishermen were the companions of his life, but his second appearing shall be ushered in by *the voice of the arch-angel and the trump of God ; thousands of thousands will minister unto him* ; all the host of heaven will pour around his chariot, and form the retinue of his approach. *Behold he cometh, and every eye shall see his glory ; behold he cometh, and every*

ear shall hear his voice, *come ye blessed, or depart ye cursed.* Awful, interesting moment ! When all in this assembly ; all who have lived, all who now live, all who shall hereafter exist, must appear at one tribunal, and receive from his lips their irriverfible doom.

BUT who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when the Lord God of gods shall appear to judge the nations ? Rejoice, ye righteous, and be exceeding glad in the prospect, for the hour of his approach is the hour of your complete redemption. *Your corruptible shall then put on incorruption, and your mortal shall put on immortality. Ye shall then appear with him in glory.*

1. THE souls of the redeemed *will then appear in glory*, being fully conformed to the image of *Jesus the first born.* Although even in the present life they are sanctified, they are sanctified only *in part* ; Although they sustain, from the moment of their regeneration a likeness to their adorable Lord, yet this likeness is infinitely imperfect while they continue upon earth. There is much darkness in the understanding of the most enlightened, and much carnality in the most purified, elevated affections. But this similitude to Jesus, their elder brother, will then be perfected. As far as the creature can resemble the Creator, or finite resemble infinite perfection.

the believer shall be assimilated to our Lord Jesus Christ. *It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him for we shall see him as he is.* No darkness shall envelope the understanding of *the just made perfect*; but they shall see face to face, and know even as also they are known. In Jehovah's light they shall see light clearly; they shall enjoy the most luminous, satisfactory views of that wisdom which formed the plan of their salvation; of that mercy which passed by their aggravated offences; of that power which supported them under numerous discouragements; of that faithfulness which fulfilled all the promises, and made every providence *work together for their good.* The will, of all that were *redeemed from among men*, shall then be completely absorbed in the will of their common Lord. No resistance will be made to any part of his procedure; no secret repining will be felt in the glorified bosom at the recollection of past evils; but each thought, each desire will everlastingly be in unison with the will of their father. "As paper receives from the press letter for letter; as wax receives from the seal mark for mark; and as mirror reflects face for face, so the righteous will then sustain grace for grace, and possess in themselves a measure of every virtue which shone so bright in Jesus Christ;" and this will constitute their dignity. Then will appear in its fullest emphasis the truth of the declaration. *The king's daughter is all glo-*

rious within ; her raiment is of wrought gold. She shall be brought to the king in raiment of needle work ; the virgins her companions that follow her shall be brought unto thee.

2. THEIR bodies will then appear in glory.* Anticipating that event this apostle exclaims in holy exultation, *He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his own glorious*

NOTE.

* No doubt can be entertained, but a visible radiance or lustre will be imparted to the bodies of the just at their resurrection from the grave. An old testament prophet, after he represents those, who sleep in the dust of the earth, as awaking, asserts that they who be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they who turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever. From this passage it is evident that although there will be different degrees of glory in the heavenly world, every body will possess a visible glory. Correspondent to this language of the prophet is the declaration of an evangelist. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. The seventy in their Greek translation of the prophecy, and Matthew in his gospel use the same word which is employed to express that splendor with which our Saviour appeared at his transfiguration on the mount : As the glories of his body were visible to every spectator, and the effulgence, darting forth, brightened even his clothes and rendered them white and shining as the light, it is obvious that a real, visible splendor will adorn his children, for they shall be fashioned like unto his own glorious body. When Moses and Elias de-

body. What peculiar radiance or majesty will adorn the *outward man* in its glorified state we cannot conceive at present; yet we are confident that the bodies of the righteous will be eternally delivered from all the consequences of transgression in Adam; they shall obtain a perfect redemption from all those frailties and deformities which are at present both their humiliation and burden. They will be no longer tortured with pain; no longer deformed with disease; no longer liable to fatigue in the service of their Lord, but they will possess undecaying vigor, and flourish in immortal youth. *This corruptible, as one triumphed who has long enjoyed these glorious realities, this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* That body, believer in Jesus, which is *sown in weakness*; which is encompassed with many infirmities, and is easily exhausted in the service of thy God, or generation, *shall be raised in power*, it shall be rendered active and vigorous, fully strengthened for

scended from heaven to witness the transfiguration of our Lord, they appeared in glory; their bodies shone with a lustre which was visible, which even astonished and dazzled the eyes of Peter and James and John who were present on that occasion. It is therefore highly probable from these considerations that the glorified bodies of the redeemed in heaven will be like so many bodies of the purest light, irradiated forever by Jesus the Sun of righteousness, and reflecting light on each other.

sustaining *that eternal weight of glory* to which it will then be promoted; that body which *is sown in corruption*, which is the constant subject of disease in life, which must at last fall a victim to death and “mingle with its kindred dust,” *shall be raised in incorruption*, liable to no fatigue or decay or dissolution: that body which *is sown in dishonor*, which now sustains humiliating marks of its apostacy, and in virtue of the curse early denounced, is subject to the ignominy of death, *shall be raised in glory*, shall be redeemed from all deformity, and surpass in outward magnificence the body even of innocent Adam. That which *is sown a natural body*, which is formed to the purposes of animal life, and is supported by means in common with the animal world, *shall be raised a spiritual body*, it shall be no more subject to animal affections, no more prone to fleshly indulgences, but being refined and spiritual in its qualities, shall become a suitable companion for the glorified spirit in the pure joys of immortality; it shall be capable of serving and enjoying its God without weariness or interruption forever, and ever.

8. THEIR prospects will then be glorious. Their souls perfectly purified from all the remains of corruption, and their bodies raised up in power and glory shall be reunited. The adorable Judge, as a mark of distinction, will affectionately place them *on his right hand*, where

they will literally *appear with him in glory*. He will afford them the most endearing, ravishing expressions of his love, and publicly and honorably acknowledge both their persons and performances; all the prayers which they had formerly offered up, all the tears which they had secretly shed on account of their own iniquities, or the abominations of others; all the contributions which they had honestly made for the support of his poor, or the spread of his gospel through the earth, all these he will respectfully mention to his Father, to angels, to the assembled universe; with his own hand the Judge will reach forth to all his followers *a crown of righteousness, a palm of victory*, and with the highest possible complacency invite them to a possession of that kingdom which he had *purchased with his own blood*, and to a seat on that throne to which he himself is exalted. *He that confesseth me before men, him will I also confess before my father and the holy angels*. Thus conducted to the New-Jerusalem under Jesus *the Captain of salvation* they shall live and reign with him forevermore. These most precious truths are taught with peculiar propriety and force in our shorter catechism. “At the resurrection believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoyment of God to all eternity.”

THERE is one excellence peculiar to this glory of the redeemed which ought not to pass unnoticed, it will remain unfading forevermore. All that is splendid in the visible creation will ere long decay, and vanish away. "The stars shall fade away; the sun grow dim with age, and nature sink in years," but this glory with which the *children of the resurrection shall appear* will be subject to no abatement, to no end. *The face of Moses shone as he descended from the mount, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold him for the glory of his countenance; which glory was done away.* The body of the Son of God appeared in glory on the mount of transfiguration; *his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light*; even this glory of the Son was speedily veiled under a cloud, but this glory of the ransomed of Jehovah will blaze forth unobscured, unabating through the ceaseless ages of eternity. *Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father: they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever.*

THIS subject, thus imperfectly illustrated, suggests,

1. THAT Jesus Jehovah is the portion, and glory of the righteous both on earth and in heaven. All the blessings which they now enjoy

they receive immediately and exclusively from him their redeeming Lord. All their wisdom in the things which concern their everlasting peace is derived from him their prophet. *As the sun of righteousness he shines upon their understanding, giving them the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.* Through the efficacy of that sacrifice which he offered on the cross, they receive forgiveness of sin, and the inheritance of immortality. All that grace, by which they are enabled to perform any duty or resist temptation, is received from his covenant fullness. *He is made of God unto them wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ; That he that glorieth, may glory in the Lord Jesus Jehovah.* As on earth, in heaven also, Jesus in his mediatorial character will constitute the life, the light, the portion and glory of the ransomed tribes.— *There, they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more : Why ? Because the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them into living fountains of water. There shall be no night in the heavenly sanctuary ; no complaint of darkness or desertion. Why ? The glory of God doth lighten it, even the Lamb is the light thereof ; and the nations of them which are saved shall walk in his light.* All the joys of the church triumphant are thus derived immediately from him, and to him, *as the author and finisher of their salvation,* every heart and voice will ascend in the most grateful ascriptions of praise.—

Each worshiper will press near the throne to contemplate that mystery, *the Word made flesh ; the Lamb that was slain and redeemed us to God by his blood*, while all the arches of the temple will resound with one unceasing hallelujah, *salvation to him that sitteth upon the throne, even to the Lamb for ever and ever.*

2. THIS doctrine suggests that our gracious Lord really delights in the felicity of his children, and will certainly appear for their redemption.— He may leave them to be afflicted for a season in this world of corruption and sorrow: He may suffer them to be tried with *fore adversity*, and discouragements, but, thanks be to his name, they shall not languish forever. *If need be they are in heaviness now, through manifold temptations*, but even these temptations shall be made to issue in their greater advantage at last: This *trial of their faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, shall be found to praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.* He who purchased the kingdom, after he has accomplished all his designs in them, and by them, and for them will gloriously appear and give them the actual possession of that kingdom. *In my Father's house are many mansions*, he testified for the encouragement of his disconsolate disciples formerly, and through them for the support of his dejected followers in every age; *I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go and prepare a*

place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself; that where I am ye may be also. From his followers, our compassionate Lord turns to his righteous father and expostulates, *I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.* He permits them to be tossed with tempest, and not comforted, that the joys of heaven may be more welcome at last : He leaves them to darkness, and dejection in this world that they may be ready to hail with greater transport the rising of that *day-star* which shall never set : He permits them to be assailed by their spiritual adversaries, and occasionally to be defeated in the conflict, that they may receive more gratefully *that crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge will give them at his appearing.* Hail, ye highly favored of Jehovah, for behold your redemption draweth nigh. Your present afflictions, however frequently they recur, or however grievous they are to be borne, are really, though insensibly *working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

3. WE learn from this doctrine that at the revelation of Jesus Christ, the true character of his followers shall be unfolded. The glories of the redeemer himself were veiled while he tabernacled in our world. *He was oppressed and he was afflicted:* He was vilified as an enemy to Cæsar; he was reproached as a *deceiver*, as flattering his disciples with prospects which would never be re-

alised ; he was even impeached with blasphemy against heaven, by declaring himself to be *the Son of God*. It was not until his departure from this world, and his ascension on high that his glories bursted forth in their real effulgence.— As it was with Jesus their Lord, it is also with his disciples while they continue in the world. They are considered as weak and contemptible ; their sincerity is ridiculed as hypocrisy ; their experiences as delusion ; their zeal for their Master's honor as phrenzy, and enthusiasm ; their tenderness of conscience, and fear of grieving the divine Spirit as mere affectation. In opposing the corruptions of others they are derided as disturbing the peace of society, and even *turning the world upside down*. The apostles were thus esteemed as *the off-scouring of all things, as a spectacle of scorn to the world*, and all who walk in their footsteps must become sharers with them in persecution. But, at the manifestation of Jesus Christ, *this offence of the cross* shall cease for ever, and all his ransomed shall *appear with him in glory*. If we honestly *confess him*, he will openly *confess us* ; if we be reproached with him, we shall also reign with him ; *if we suffer with him, we shall hereafter be glorified together*. The ridicule which his followers are called to encounter now shall then be rewarded by that gracious plaudit, *Well done good and faithful servant* ; the neglect to which they are exposed for his *sake's sake* will be compensated by the fellow-

ship of his Father and the holy angels : The sacrifices which are made for the advancement of his cause shall be rewarded by an *inheritance that fadeth not away*. *Because ye have followed me in the regeneration*, the judge will publicly announce in his immense condescension, *because ye have followed me in the regeneration I appoint unto you a kingdom as my Father also hath appointed unto me*.

PERSEVERE then, ye redeemed of the Lord, in your spiritual conflict however arduous it may appear. If your path be thorny, thanks be to God, it is short ; is your warfare keen, and, as an apostle expresses it, *fiery*, it will soon be *accomplished*, and issue in victory and triumph : Do your heart and your flesh occasionally fail in the struggle, *Jehovah himself will be the strength of your heart, and your portion for ever*. Be looking and longing for this appearing of your Lord as the hour of your complete consummation.— Is the affectionate wife anxious for the return of an absent husband ; does she wait with impatience for the day, or the hour when his arrival may be expected ? Much more ardently should the *bride, the Lamb's wife*, be longing for the approach of her glorious *bridegroom*, that she may enjoy his immediate presence, and be for ever satisfied with his joys. This is called in scripture, *looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God* : *Looking for that blessed hope,*

and the glorious appearing of the great God, even our saviour Jesus Christ, and is perhaps the highest attainment of a believer upon earth. There is no greater evidence that he is conformed to the image of God, and ripened for the enjoyment of heaven, than this ardent, disinterested desire to depart, and to be with Christ : When, fatigued with the corruptions and vexations of life, he longs for the joys of his Lord, and groans, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with his house which is from heaven. Elevated thus above the world, and its delusive prospects, and captivated with those glories that are to be revealed, the apostle exclaims, I look at the things that are not seen, and are eternal : I am willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord : I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. May such, through the purifying, elevating influences of God the Spirit, be our attainment, and to those who thus look for him the Son will shortly appear without sin unto salvation. Even so come, Lord Jesus.

*“ O glorious hour ! O blest abode,
We shall be near, and like our God ;
And flesh, and sin no more controul,
The sacred pleasures of the soul.*

*Our flesh shall slumber in the ground,
’Till the last trumpet’s joyful sound ;
Then burst the chains with sweet surprise,
And in our saviour’s image rise,”*

Sermon XV.

The superior Privileges of the Heavenly World.



PHILIPPIANS i. 23.

HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART, AND TO BE WITH
CHRIST WHICH IS FAR BETTER.

THE traveller looks forward with anxiety for the end of his course ; he anticipates with pleasure that hour when the fatigues of his journey shall terminate ; when he shall reach his own habitation, and be restored to the enjoyment of his family, and friends. The soldier waits with impatience for the period when the perils of the campaign will be over ; when every enemy to his country shall be subdued, and he receive a reward for his fidelity and fortitude. The mariner casts a “longing look” to the wished for haven ; he expects upon reaching that to be relieved from the toils and dangers of the deep, and to enjoy each desirable accommodation. With an ardor, an impatience incomparably greater may the spiritual pilgrim long for his father’s house, or the spiritual soldier for that crown which the righteous judge shall award to each faithful follower. Such is the frame, and the exercise recommended by our divine redeemer, *Let your loins be girded about, and ye your-*

selves like unto men that wait for their Lord. Such are the desires which the holy apostle ardently breathes in the verse now chosen for consideration. *Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ which is far better.*

THE word which we translate, *depart*, may be rendered *to loose anchor, or set sail*. There may be an allusion to a mariner who wishes to exchange one port for another; to quit one harbor, where he is liable to inconveniences, or exposed to the assault of some adversary for another more hospitable and safe, where no enemy can invade, or tempest annoy. The apostle, fatigued with the corruptions, and crosses of this world, expresses a desire to exchange it for that peaceful shore, where no tempest hurls its fury, where no enemy shall ever disturb, but all will be safety and *quietness forever*.

BUT our own translation of the original word is perhaps more proper, and shall therefore be retained. Death in scripture is frequently compared to a *journey, or departure*. *Man is represented as going to his long home*. Simeon, the aged, venerable Simeon, devoutly expostulates, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word*; and this apostle mentions in the prospect of his dissolution, *I am ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand*.

It is intended to shew, with much scriptural simplicity—

1. WHY the christian's death may be compared to a *departure*.

2. The reason why he is not only willing, but impatient to *depart*, the prospect of *being with Christ*—And

3. THE superior advantages which he may expect in the heavenly state, *it is far better*.

1. IN a *departure*, agreeably to the common acceptation of the word, we change our abode ; we remove from one place of residence to another. The believer's death is for this reason justly compared to a *departure*. He then passes from time to eternity, from earth to heaven, and *the place which formerly knew him will know him no more*. He then exchanges his abode on earth for a mansion in the *city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem*, and his precarious treasures for an *inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away*. In this we groan, says the apostle, personating the afflicted, disconsolate righteous on earth, *in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven : For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

2. IN departing from a particular place we usually change our society ; we leave our former companions with our former possessions, and mingle with new associates. For this reason also the believer's death is justly compared to a departure. He leaves, in the moment of his dissolution, all his earthly friends, and connections ; those to whom he had been united by relations the most tender and endearing ; those with whom he had been long concerned in the common offices of life ; those with whom he had intimately and profitably associated in the exercises of religion, by whose conversation he had been often refreshed and encouraged in his journey through life, or to whom he had frequently imparted consolation in the season of perplexity, and discouragement, all these the dying christian leaves and enters the purer, the more delightful and profitable society of the heavenly world ; he then *sits down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the whole church of the first born in the kingdom of God* ; he is admitted to the fellowship of an *innumerable company of angels* ; he is brought to *God the judge of all, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.*

3. IN a *departure* we ordinarily change not only our companions, but our pursuits and employments. The believers death for this reason also may be compared to a *departure*. As he is then introduced to other society he becomes en-

gaged in new exercises. While the christian continues in the present world he is necessarily involved in the pursuits of the world. His personal or family concerns occupy a great share of his time and attention ; the common interests which he has with others in matters social, or civil, or sacred oblige him to take his part with them in the management of these concerns. But in heaven he will be eternally relieved from all anxieties, or occupations of this kind ; then his thoughts will be all spiritual, and his only employment will be praise. There the blessed inhabitants will have no wants to be supplied, being no longer subject to hunger, or thirst, or disease ; there they will neither *marry nor be given in marriage, but be as the angels* ; their only exercise will be the service of Jehovah, and their supreme felicity will consist in his enjoyment. They are therefore represented *as standing before the throne, and serving God day and night in his temple* ; they are forever lost in the admiration of the INFINITE THREE, in contemplating their perfections as displayed in the works of creation, and redemption ; they will especially adore that sovereignty and wisdom and love which brought the greatest good out of the greatest evil, and over-ruled so exactly every event for the glory of the uncreated majesty, and the happiness of the *election of grace*. *After this I beheld, sings the New-Testament prophet, and a great multitude, which no man could number*

of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues stood before the throne, and before the lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands ; and cried with a loud voice, salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb.

BUT it is not merely the prospect of changing his residence, or society, or employment which transports the believer in the approach of his dissolution, and renders him *desirous to depart*. He is actuated by higher, and more disinterested motives ; *he desires to depart that he may be with Christ*, his beloved and friend.

1. IN heaven all the faithful will be brought into the most intimate, and endearing union with our Lord Jesus Christ. They are even in the present life really and indissolvably joined to the saviour. They are united to him as the branches are united to the vine, or as the members of the human body are united to the head. They are actually *espoused to this one husband, and rendered one spirit with him*. But hereafter this relation will be inconceivably improved, and perfected. The marriage union, which commenced in their conversion to the living God, will then be consummated, and the spiritual *Bride* admitted to the full enjoyment of Jesus her husband.—That extatic anthem will then resound through every street of the heavenly city, *let us be glad,*

and rejoice, and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. For this more intimate, and perfect union of his members to himself our enthroned advocate earnestly intercedes at the right hand of the majesty on high. I pray for them, that they all may be one, as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.

2. IN heaven they will enjoy the unclouded vision, the uninterrupted fruition of our Lord Jesus Christ. Believers in the present world are required *to walk chiefly by faith ; they see as through a glass darkly*, and their nearest approaches to Jesus whom their souls love are comparatively distant. Through ordinances as through a dark medium a few solitary rays beam forth to cheer their drooping hearts, and guide their feet in the ways of righteousness. Sometimes while they are employed in reading the promises, or contemplating the divine perfections as they shine in the face of Jesus Christ ; sometimes while they hear the messages of salvation from the ministers of the cross, or as they receive under visible symbols the body and blood of their dying Lord, they enjoy lively pledges of his love, and are emboldened to utter the language of assurance, *My Lord, and my God : My beloved is mine, and I am his : I know that my redeemer liveth, whom I*

shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold him : But in heaven every vail will be removed, and in the effulgence of his own light they shall *see their Saviour face to face.* There, with a familiarity ten thousand times greater than even the inspired evangelist had attained upon earth, *their eyes will see, their ears will hear, their hands will handle of the word of life,* and all their wants shall be supplied from the overflowings of his love. Yes, that very Jesus of whom they had so often read in the scriptures ; of whom they had so often heard in the sanctuary ; of whom it had been their greatest delight to discourse, and whom they had so ardently desired to behold : that very Jesus who *for their sakes* lay obscure in the manger of Bethlehem, who was *despised and rejected* by the world, who endured sorrows unremitting, sufferings the most exquisite, and a death the most ignominious and painful ; that very Jesus will then be exhibited without one intervening cloud for ever and ever. None of the *spirits of the just made perfect* will ever have reason to expostulate with Moses, *Lord, shew me thy glory, for Jehovah will be all and in all :* Their sun shall no more go down, neither shall their moon withdraw itself, but the Lord shall be unto them an everlasting light, and their God their glory. None in the streets of the New Jerusalem will be found enquiring with the disconsolate spouse, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth,* or uttering the plaintive exclamation of Job, *O that I knew*

where I might find him, I would go even to his seat, for every eye shall see him and all shall know, even as also they are known.

3. IN heaven all their fellowship with the father will be in the face, and through the mediation of Jesus Christ. From the moment of our apostacy in the first Adam, our representative in the covenant of works, there could be no comfortable approach to an absolute God: He could become propitious to man, and afford the pledges of his good will only through the interposition of a mediator. *God was in Christ*; when immediate access to the uncreated majesty was rendered impossible by the disobedience of the first Adam, *a new and a living way was opened up by the mediation of the second*; *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses.* Through him, through the Eternal Son appearing in the character of a mediator, *we both, Jews and Gentiles, have an access by one spirit unto the Father.* All our approaches to Jehovah are exclusively through the sacrifice, and mediation *of the word made flesh.* As all our communion with the Father in grace, all our communion with him in glory must be through the mediation of Jesus Christ. This is a consideration to which I wish your attention to be particularly directed. It is the opinion of some that when all the *election of grace* are brought in and the present dispensation of mercy shall ter-

minate, that all our dependance on the Son as mediator will then cease, and our fellowship with the Father will be immediate. This is certainly a very great mistake, and tends to derange the whole economy of redemption. What is glory, but the perfection of grace, and as all our enjoyments now are through the interposition of a mediator, why not hereafter? Besides, it is proper that as Jesus procured the kingdom, he should have the honor of occupying the throne, and eternally administering the kingdom; that as he obtained every spiritual and immortal blessing at a price inconceivably great, even the surrender of his own life, he should have the honor of communicating every blessing to the favored heirs of salvation; and this reward is everlastingly reserved to him. Our Lord Jesus Christ will as really appear in his person God-man; he will as really exercise each mediatorial office in heaven, as on earth, and all the blessedness and all the glory of his members will immediately depend on that exercise. He is therefore pronounced with peculiar emphasis *the light of the heavenly temple*: he is represented as *filling all and in all*; as *leading them into living fountains of waters*. He will be forever bringing them nearer, and nearer to Jehovah the source of all their bliss, and inviting them to drink deeper and deeper of that *pure river of the water of life which flows from his throne*. *The father loveth the son, and as a reward for his former humiliation, hath gi-*

ven all things into his hand. In him as the great trustee of the covenant all its blessings are now deposited, and by him they will be communicated both in time, and eternity.

Is the christian, in the moment of his dissolution, admitted into the immediate presence of Jesus his beloved; does he see him forever as he is, and know him as he is known, who would not desire to depart? To consider the superior advantages of the heavenly state was our third proposition, and to this your attention is now invited, *It is far better.*

THE heavenly state may be pronounced far better for the righteous, because,

1. THEN they will glorify God more perfectly and this consideration should excite an ardent *desire to depart.* Here ten thousand imperfections accompany those who are most advanced in the divine life. Every service that we perform is tinged by the pollutions of a *heart deceitful above all things.* We never pray; we never praise; we never love God; we never love our neighbor with that purity and fervor which the holy law requires. The most spiritual worshiper on earth, in his most spiritual moments, may unite in the humiliating confession, *I am carnal; the good which I would I do not, and the evil that I would not that do I:* But in heaven all imperfections

will be eternally done away. There will be no complaint of indifference among the spirits of the *just made perfect* ; there will be no wandering of imagination ; no langour of love ; no alienation of heart, but every thought will be spiritual ; every bosom will burn with the purest, the most ardent flame of love to God, and to all around. Every harp will be tuned to its highest string, and each worshiper will sing with an extacy inconceivably greater than that of the militant David, *I will bless Jehovah at all times, and his praise shall be continually in my mouth : My meditation of him shall be sweet, and I will rejoice in the Lord : Bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless his holy name : Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases : Who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with loving kindness, and tender mercies.*

2. THEY will hereafter enjoy him more fully. As our services are imperfect during our pilgrimage on earth, our enjoyments are also incomplete. The comforter who should relieve our souls is often removed, and *our candle goes out* in almost utter darkness. Ordinances are frequently *like dry breasts* to the spiritual babe, affording little nourishment or consolation, and those joys which they occasionally impart are of short duration. The sun which diffuses its healing beams one hour is veiled in darkness the next. But in heaven *there is fullness of joy, and pleasures for*

evermore. One tide of bliss from the throne of God will uninterruptedly flow forth to revive and refresh the enraptured spirits. The Father who elected them will eternally afford them the most tender, animating assurances of his good will: The Son will ardently rejoice in them, and over them as the fruit of all his toil and *travail*: The Holy Ghost, who sealed them, and sanctified and made them meet to be partakers of that inheritance, will communicate the purest pleasures; he will fully satisfy in glory those desires which he had excited in grace. As Jehovah is now *able*, then he will actually *do for them exceedingly, abundantly above what they can ask or think.* *To him that overcometh*, is the declaration of him who has procured these blessings, and has an undoubted right to promise and impart them, *to him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and he shall go no more out, but shall inherit all things.*

3. HEAVEN *is far better*, because there the happiness of the redeemed is liable to no abatement. Innumerable circumstances occur in the present life to embitter the christian's joys. Bodily pain, the recollection of former failures by which God was dishonored, or others injured; a consciousness of our present unworthiness; the fear of apostatising hereafter, and bringing a reproach on our profession; the loss of dear connections, or the unconcern of others about the realities of

eternity, the prevalence of inward corruption, or the degeneracy of the age in which we live, these and a thousand other nameless evils are like *wormwood and gall* to the believer embittering his cup of consolation on earth; they frequently occasion anguish of heart and cause *rivers of waters* to flow from his eyes. The christian owing to these sometimes *refuses to be comforted* : and nothing but the prospect of final redemption preserves him from sinking under the pressure, and yielding to abject despair ; he sings occasionally with mingled emotions of sorrow, and joy, *Altho' my heart and my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure ; this is all my salvation, and all my desire.* But in heaven there will be nothing within, or without to diminish their joys ; no unwelcome shade will ever pass along intercepting the rays of their sun ; no bitter dreg shall infuse itself into their cup of consolation. *The ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joys upon their heads ; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.* Every inferior anxiety shall then be absorbed in the most fervid, disinterested concern for the glory of God, and a full comprehension of his plans will produce the most entire acquiescence in all his dispensations both of providence and grace. No longer does Jeremiah, in the spirit of discontent, or disappointment, *curse the day*

in which he was born, or Asaph complain, I have cleansed my heart in vain, or washed my hands in innocency; they are ever exclaiming with united hearts and elevated voices, He hath done all things well: O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. O Lord, how excellent are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all; the heavens are full of thy goodness.

How transporting is the prospect of happiness thus unmingled, unending? Natural light is sweet, and it is a pleasant thing for the eye to behold the sun shining in his strength, but incomparably more reviving will be the light of the sun of righteousness which shall arise in the region of glory never to be clouded, or obscured more: How agreeable would be the prospect of enjoying a single week, or month, or year without any anxiety or inconvenience; to possess a mind perfectly serene, a body in full health, and the ocean around us altogether unruffled? How reviving, yea, overwhelming is then the prospect of an eternity, a never, never ending eternity without any thing to ruffle our repose; when the mind shall enjoy a perpetual calm; when the body shall flourish in undecaying health; when melody the most refined shall charm the ear; when scenery the most enchanting shall feast the eye; and God, and Jesus, and angels shall unite in ministering to our bliss?

*“ No pain those happy regions know,
Forever bright and fair,
For sin the source of mortal woe,
Shall never enter there.*

*There no alternate night is known,
Or sun’s faint sickening ray,
But glory from the sacred throne,
Spreads everlasting day.”*

YOUR own imaginations, brethren, must anticipate me in the application of this subject.

1. It may be inferred *that Godliness* is incomparably the greatest gain ; it not only supports amidst the numerous adversities of life, but it imparts both composure and triumph in the hour of death. Behold the ungodly in the prospect of dissolution : What remorse rends their consciences at each recollection of the past, what anxiety overwhelms their spirits at each anticipation of the future ? But *while the wicked is driven away in his wickedness, the righteous hath hope in his death.* To this he looks forward not with emotions of terror, but with transports of joy ; this event he hails as the conclusion of all his sorrows, and the commencement of ineffable, everlasting joy. Then every lust which now disturbs, shall be effectually subdued ; every enemy shall be finally vanquished ; all that darkness which now spreads unwelcome over his mind shall be dissipated by the dawning of a day which

shall never end, and all his wants shall be supplied from those rivers of pleasure which can never be exhausted. He looks forward to the grave as a rest from all the labors, a peaceful retreat from all the calamities of life; he looks forward to the approaching judgment for a public, an honorable acquittal from every possible charge; he looks forward to the resurrection as the period, when his present frail body shall awake from the slumbers of the grave, and be *fashioned like unto the glorious body of his thrice glorious Lord*: he looks forward to eternity as a scene of health without disease, of pleasure without pain, of light without darkness, of glory without reproach, of enjoyment without a moment's interruption, or the least degree of abatement. No wonder that the apostle, realizing these glories of immortality, should cherish a *desire of departing*; of being *absent from the body that he might be present with the Lord*: and justly mayest thou, christian, being a partaker of the same grace unite in the same challenge of triumph, *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. WE learn from this doctrine that the full uninterrupted enjoyment of Christ is not to be expected in this world. *Without will be fightings, and within will be fears* while we continue on earth. Our unbelief, our indolence, our self-

confidence often grieve our beloved, and provokes him to depart, refusing *the joys of his salvation*. If he appears to us at some particular seasons, as he did *to the disciples going to Emmaus*, he immediately *vanishes out of our sight*. We are often obliged to repeat the antient, melancholy complaint, *I sought him whom my soul loveth, I sought him but I found him not*: Is this, beloved reader, is this thy complaint now? Art thou weeping, and lamenting with the disconsolate Mary, *They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him*? Be not surprised, nor discouraged by this want of sensible communion with thy Redeemer. It is thy Father's pleasure that thou shouldest *walk by faith*, whilst thou art kept in this world. This is the path in which all thy brethren and sisters who are now in glory have trodden before thee. They were in doubt, in perplexities, in afflictions, in tribulations often; but out of *all these the Lord hath delivered them*, and from all thy present fears and distresses he will shortly deliver thee. *The God of all grace who hath called thee to his eternal glory by Jesus Christ, after thou hast suffered a little, will bring thee to the full fruition of this glory*. Thy faith shall then give way to the clearest vision, and thou shalt eternally behold thy Beloved without a vail, without a cloud.

3. We learn from this doctrine that the immediate presence of Jesus Jehovah constitutes the

joy of the heavenly world. Admit the *departing* spirit to the communion of patriarchs and prophets and apostles, it would be unsatisfied : Introduce it to the society of *Enoch who formerly walked with God, and was translated without seeing death ; of Abraham the father of the faithful ; of Isaiah who testified with such transport of heart, and such elevation of stile, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow ; of Moses the great deliverer of the law, and Elijah its restorer, and to all that shining throng of martyrs who received joyfully the spoiling of their goods, who loved not even their lives unto the death for the name of Jesus, but sealed their testimony with their blood, introduce the departing spirit to the society of all these, it would still be unsatisfied ; nay, was the christian, upon his entrance into heaven, brought to the most intimate fellowship of that innumerable company of angels who kept their first estate, nobly resisting the solicitations of the rest who apostatised from their sovereign ; introduce him to those seraphims and cherubims who often attended our saviour upon earth, who worshipped him at his birth, who ministered to him in the wilderness, who strengthened him in the garden, who left their seats in bliss and came down to witness his ascension on high, who now stand before the throne and cast their crowns at his feet, introduce the departing saint to the fellowship of either, or all those he would still be disposed to exclaim, in the language of*

disappointment and grief, *Saw ye him whom my soul loveth : O, that I knew where I might find him, I would go even to his seat.* Heaven would be no heaven without the sight and fruition of his Saviour. The smiles of *ten thousand, thousand* saints, and *ten thousand, thousand* angels would impart no consolation without the enjoyment of *the Lamb that was slain and redeemed him to God by his blood.* The fellowship of Jesus in the closet, in the family, in the sanctuary, formed his chief felicity on earth, and this will be the crown of all his blessedness and glory in heaven. And, O believer, does not thy spirit leap for joy at the consideration that thou shalt be with him ; thou shalt certainly and shortly *be with Christ which is far better.* Yes, believer, thou shalt *see him for thyself ; thine eyes shall behold him, and not another.* Praise, praise be to his name, the wheels of his chariot shall not long tarry. A few more revolving seasons, a few more roling suns, a few more fleeting moments ; a little more frailty of body, a little more dejection of mind, a little more conflict with corruption, and the darkness of earth shall be exchanged for the full blaze of heaven's glory. *Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn our beloved and be thou like a roe, or a young hart on the mountains of Bether.* AMEN.

Sermon XVI.

*Our Ruin in the First Adam more than repaired
by our Recovery in the Second.*



ROMANS v. 20.

WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE
ABOUND.

THIS chapter, from the twelfth verse to the conclusion, is an epitome of divine revelation. The inspired author leads us back to the creation of this world; he represents our first Father as engaging in the capacity of our federal head; as violating the sacred trust reposed in him, and by his transgression bringing ruin on himself and his off-spring. *The second Adam* is afterwards introduced as interposing in behalf of a chosen seed; as suffering in their nature and name, and by the merit of his sacrifice becoming *the author of eternal salvation*. *For if by one man's offence, he testifies, death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ:* After the Apostle has taken this comprehensive survey of the means of our ruin, and recovery; after he has contemplated the *first Adam* standing the representative of the human family, and, by his wanton disobe-

dience, forfeiting every blessing with respect to himself, and them : after he has contemplated the *Second Adam* succeeding in his room ; *fulfilling all righteousness, and opening a living way to the holiest of all*, he draws the important, reviving conclusion contained in our text, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.*

THE term *sin*, as we noticed in a preceding discourse, implies a transgression of the divine law ; an omission of the duties which it requires, or the commission of what is actually forbidden : But in the present instance, its signification is more extensive ; it implies not merely the act of transgression, but those unnumbered, incalculable evils which have followed in its train ; all that dishonor which was thereby manifested to the divine authority ; all that misery to which it exposed our world, and all that derangement or disorder which it introduced into the creation of God.

GRACE usually signifies favour which is free, unmerited, unasked ; good will manifested to the unthankful and the undeserving ; but the term *grace*, as here used by the apostle, is much more comprehensive in its import ; it may with propriety be considered as implying the whole economy of redemption and its infinitely important consequences ; that eternal transaction of Jehovah the Father with his Co-equal Son which

issued in such a revenue of glory to himself ; in such a plenitude of bliss to millions of saved sinners, and in the greater establishment of righteousness in the moral world. This extensive import of the terms *sin* and *grace* is fully justified by the succeeding verse, where the apostle asserts that *as sin hath reigned unto death : as it hath triumphed in the exposure of its wretched subjects to death natural, spiritual and eternal, grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.*

WITHOUT confining your views to any formal division of this subject, it is designed to shew that the ruin produced by the *first Adam* is more than repaired by the mediation of the *second* : or that the sin of the former has been overruled to issue in greater glory to God ; in greater joy to his redeemed, and to all sinless intelligencies, in every part of his creation—

1. THROUGH the mediation of the Son of God there is a much clearer discovery of the manner in which Jehovah exists ; of that searchless adorable mystery **THREE EQUAL PERSONS** in the same Undivided Essence. No doubt can be entertained but Adam, in innocence, had some apprehension of a plurality of persons in the Godhead ; he was *created in knowledge*, and that *knowledge* must have enabled him to comprehend in some degree the *mystery of God, and*

of the Father and of Christ. One divine person is represented as addressing another, *Come let us make man in our own image*, and this distinct agency of the divine persons in his creation was probably communicated to Adam, as a means of impressing him with a sense of his obligation to each. But this mysterious doctrine which was known to man in innocence is brought more luminously to view through the substitution of the everlasting Jesus. Now we not only learn that there is a plurality of Persons, but are positively taught that there are *THREE* who bare record in heaven ; we behold each divine person deeply concerned for the redemption of man, and sustaining his peculiar office in this economy. The Father, in the most free, unmerited, adorable movements of his own mercy, appoints the Son to his mediatorial work, and secures him success in his undertaking, and an infinite and eternal reward for the same. The Son, the same in essence and equal in glory with the Father, acquiesces in the terms proposed and engages to tender the stipulated price of human salvation. The Holy Ghost, who is essentially one with the Father and the Son ; who is equally sovereign in all his operations, engages *in the good pleasure of his will* to consummate this scheme by preparing the destined heirs of mercy for the kingdom of their Father. Thus not only the distinct personality of the Uncreated Three, but the sovereignty and independence of each

person, and his compassion to man his own creature shine with a glory the most effulgent in the economy of our salvation. Through the intervention of this plan each person in Jehovah exhibits a display of indignation against sin ; a concern for the moral order of the world, and tenderness to human misery of which no conception could otherwise have been formed. As a mean of vindicating the honors of his government the Father *delivers an only Son* to become a sacrifice ; the Son makes *himself of no reputation and appears in the form of a servant*, and the Spirit enables the sinner virtually to *fulfill the law* by appropriating the surety's righteousness. Man while he retained his primitive innocence might contemplate with astonishment the mystery of a Trinity in Unity, but through the medium of Messiah's cross the glories of Jehovah Triune shed upon us a radiance incomparably milder and more captivating. Adam might feel obligated to serve and adore him from a sense of his creating goodness, but the ransomed sinner is constrained to obedience by other and stronger considerations ; he contemplates the Father's love in electing him to glory ; the grace of the Son in redeeming him from all evil, and the condescension of the Spirit in preparing him for the actual possession of this inheritance : and while he thus contemplates he exclaims in emotions of gratitude the most sincere, *I am not my own* :

I will glorify God in my body and spirit which are his.

2. IN the economy of our redemption there is the most illustrious, astonishing display of all the divine perfections. *The heavens*, indeed, *declare the glory of God* ; the various parts of his workmanship, material and immaterial, loudly proclaim *his eternal power and godhead* ; yet it is reserved for the dispensation of grace through Jesus Christ, to furnish the most luminous, commanding exhibition of each.

HERE wisdom shines with a lustre altogether unparalleled. This attribute of God appeared obvious in the natural world ; in forming innumerable orders of being animate and inanimate ; visible and invisible ; in imparting to them various endowments suitable for that station to which they were appointed ; but although this perfection is obvious in all the operations of God through the medium of the Saviour's cross it breaks forth with a *glory that excelleth*. To devise a plan by which human transgression might be fully punished, and the transgressor freely pardoned may be pronounced the highest effort of eternal wisdom. If a colony of subjects revolt from their sovereign, and expose themselves to the penalty of the law, either they or the law must suffer. If their crime is forgiven them, the law is prostituted, and others are encouraged to

rebel against the throne. But here a free, a full remission is announced to the sinner, and yet there is an exact, rigorous punishment of the sin : The violated law is rendered more sacred ; a more awful testimony is borne against transgression than if the threatening had been executed in all its horrors upon the transgressor and yet the transgressor is as completely restored to favor, as if his obedience had never been interrupted. This is a manifestation of wisdom which angels behold with ever new astonishment ; These *principalities and powers* turn away from all the other movements of Jehovah, and desire to *learn through the church his manifold, unsearchable wisdom* ; and at each new contemplation of this plan they exclaim with deeper emotions of wonder and gratitude, *O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out ?*

HERE justice appears in majesty transcendent and ineffable. Obvious proofs of this perfection were exhibited in the creation of all things and especially in the covenant transaction with Adam. The Lord God forms the man *after his own image in righteousness* : he appoints him a *righteous law* to obey, and denounces the severest penalty against the least transgression : But it is in the substitution of his *own Son* as our surety, and in fully executing upon him that wrath which was

denounced against his chosen that we behold the most bright, awful display. The period in which the Son of God was suspended upon the accursed tree, suffering, bleeding, expiring in the room of sinners may properly be pronounced the noon day blaze of Jehovah's justice. A man may be rigorous in exacting a debt from the hands of a stranger, who would perhaps be tender towards a relation or child: A prince might possibly punish treason in a subject who would pardon it in his own Son; but the great God displays the glories of his justice in not *sparing even a Son*; in not remitting a farthing of the debt due from him as the sponsor of his people; in not dispensing with a single act of obedience, or a single instance of suffering. The rigors of divine justice appeared more awful, and her prerogatives more indispensable in that single mandate, **AWAKE, O SWORD——and SMITE THE MAN THAT IS MY FELLOW** than in all the punishment which ever was inflicted, or which, through the lapse of eternal ages, ever shall be inflicted on all sinning intelligences. The moment that the sword was drawn, and bathed in the blood of the Son of God, silence must have reigned in heaven; a sacred dread, such as pure spirits are capable of feeling, must have thrilled the bosom of every angel and arch-angel; of every cherub and seraph before the throne; recovering from their deep amazement these *principalities and powers*

must have sung with more profound emotions of astonishment and awe, **JUST** and **TRUE** are **THY WAYS**, **THOU KING** of *saints* ; *Who knoweth the power of thine ANGER ? Who shall not fear thee, and glorify thy name, for thou only art HOLY :* These spirits of light had witnessed repeated and awful proofs of the divine displeasure against sin ; they had seen legions of their revolting Peers turned out of heaven ; Adam driven from Paradise ; Sodom and Gomorrah wrapped in flames for the iniquities of the inhabitants, but the death of the Lord of Glory was an example of vengeance against sin without a parallel in all the operations of God. This was the clearest possible admonition to all rational spectators, *that every transgression and disobedience must receive a just recompence of reward.* He that will not spare a SON cannot spare a stranger. Does the Father with his own hand fill up the cup of trembling ; and oblige a Son, *an only, an infinitely beloved Son* to drink it to the lowest dregs, who can reasonably expect to escape ? The apostle therefore mentions with peculiar emphasis, *Him hath God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood to declare his RIGHTEOUSNESS for the remission of sin:* least any should misunderstand his meaning he adds, if possible, in language more explicit, *To declare, I say, at this time his RIGHTEOUSNESS, that he might be JUST, and the JUSTIFIER of him which believeth in Jesus.*

HERE divine goodness displays her exceeding; abundant munificence. The Creator afforded evidences of his bounty from the beginning, and particularly to Adam our first father. He placed him in Eden, the most delightful part of this world ; he poured around him in rich profusion every earthly enjoyment, and promised immortal felicity for himself and his posterity on condition of his personal obedience. But goodness which appears in all the dealings of the Creator with his creatures displays her riches beyond all comparison in the redemption of fallen man ; in not merely recovering him from the ruins of his apostacy, but in promoting him to higher degrees of glory and happiness, than he had enjoyed previous to transgression. An earthly monarch is considered *good* if he merely suspends the execution of the penalty against an offender, although he should deprive him of the privileges enjoyed by other subjects ; should the sovereign go farther and both pardon the offence and restore the offender to all the immunities of a citizen, this would be pronounced goodness in the extreme. But this display of benignity would not admit even of a comparison with the goodness manifested by the King Eternal towards man the irreconcilable enemy of his crown.—He does not merely dispense pardons to them, but he pardons **FREELY, ABUNDANTLY, EVERLASTINGLY** ; he so completely forgives their offences that they shall never be men-

tioned to the reproach of those who committed them : *With the Lord there is mercy, and with him is PLENTEOUS redemption, and he will redeem Israel from ALL his iniquities.* He not only delivers from condemnation on account of former failures, but preserves them intalibly in allegiance for the time to come ; so that every privilege is secured beyond the possibility of forfeiture : Nay, the Lord God manifests his bounty in a manner still more astonishing, more unparalleled, by restoring his ransomed people to richer immunities than were enjoyed even in innocence. He no longer considers them as *servants* in his family, or *subjects* of his government, but addresses them by a *new name* more tender and endearing, even that of *sons and of daughters*. He entails upon them a larger inheritance, and imparts to them more abundant honors than the very angels enjoy who *kept their first estate*. While these seraphic spirits are now occupied in learning through the church *the manifold wisdom* and adorable justice of God, here also they acquire more elevated conceptions of his *goodness*. While they *sing a new song, thy righteousness is like great mountains, utterly inflexible ; thy judgments are a great deep, altogether unfathomable ;* they add as an essential part of their anthem, *How excellent is thy LOVING KINDNESS, O God : O that men would praise the Lord for his GOODNESS, and for his wonderful works to the children of men ?*"

HERE divine power appears with a majesty ineffably great and astonishing. Jehovah proclaimed himself *great in might* in giving existence to this world ; in creating, with infinite ease, so many stars, and suns and systems. *He spake and it was instantly done ; he commanded and every order of being rose into existence, and stood ready to assume the station appointed it.* But this perfection of Deity appears in a light still more commanding in the redemption of man ; in supporting the surety under the infinite load of human guilt, and bringing him forth *more than a conqueror* from his arduous undertaking. The demerit of a single transgression is sufficient to sink a world : The weight of one murderous act constrained Cain to cry out, *my punishment is greater than I can bear* : The weight of one act of rebellion sunk the *angels who excel in strength* from the heights of heaven to the depths of hell. How great then, beyond all description or conception, was the pressure which was borne by the eternal Substitute ? He sustained the weight not merely of *one sin*, but of *many* ; not the guilt of *one transgressor only*, but of *millions*, and the transgressions of each of these exceeded in number *millions multiplied by millions*. He bore the sin of Adam who had resisted light the most clear, and trampled on goodness the most profuse ; of Manassah who had caused the *streets of Jerusalem to flow with innocent blood* ; of Corinthian idolaters and drunkards, and revilers, and extortioners ; and

of those countless millions who have been saved, or who shall hereafter be *redeemed from among men*. The weight of the crimes of all those lay at once upon our gracious Sponsor. But did he sink, or fail beneath the amazing load? No: the more he was oppressed, the mightier he grew; *he travelled in the greatness of his strength, mighty, all-mighty to save*, until he could proclaim, **IT IS FINISHED**: “Every precept of the divine law is completely magnified; all its curses are exhausted; the flames of hell are quenched; the flaming sword which guarded the gates of the heavenly paradise is averted, and the way to the holiest of all laid open.” But these were not the only prodigies of power accomplished by our Lord in his hour of agony. He encountered at that moment the combined legions of hell; drove them from their usurped dominion; seized the arch apostate and, binding him in everlasting chains, planted the standard of his cross in the very centre of their empire. In what strains of transport did the holy apostle celebrate these triumphs of his Lord? *He spoiled principalities and powers; he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross*. With what extacies of astonishment did the evangelic prophet anticipate these victories of the saviour? *Who is this that cometh from Edom? This that is glorious in his apparel, and travelling in the greatness of his strength?* The angels of light, kindling into ardour at the wondrous scene,

rapturously reply, THE LORD STRONG AND MIGHTY ; THE LORD MIGHTY IN BATTLE ; “ the all conquering Messiah, victorious over sin, satan, death and hell.”

HERE divine sovereignty shines with majesty transcendent and adorable. In every part of his work, we behold this prerogative of Jehovah visibly displayed. *As the potter hath power over the clay to form out of the same lump vessels of different sizes ; as he makes one to greater and others to lesser honor, the Lord God in the sovereign, unsearchable freedom of his will creates beings of various orders, and imparts to some more abundant honor than to others.* Particular classes of being are created merely material and capable of no other than animal enjoyments ; man he endows with a constitution partly material and capable of pleasures in common with the beasts of the field, partly spiritual and capable of pleasures in common with the angels : He creates the angels pure spirits ; endows them with immense intellectual capacities, approaching nearer to the perfection of his own nature, and assigns them the highest rank in his creation. But although Jehovah appears sovereign in all his ways, his sovereignty shines with distinguishing glory in the scheme of redemption through the son of his love. Man and angels united in rebellion against the Eternal King, and became equally obnoxious to his wrath ; but how dif-

ferent is their doom ? In the fathomless depth of his sovereignty* the Lord God deals with the latter according to the rigors of his justice, and adjudges them to the *vengeance of eternal fire*, but to man he exercises the richest mercy, and restores him to favor and happiness. How different are his dealings even with men who are of the same nature ; involved in the same condem-

NOTE.

* *Some have undertaken to assign a reason for the restoration of the human, rather than the angelic nature. They assert that angels were exalted above man by their creator ; that they enjoyed clearer manifestations of his glory ; that they had none to tempt or seduce them to apostacy ; and consequently that their offence was more aggravated, and merited punishment the most exemplary and severe. They offer, on the other hand, many reasons for extenuating the guilt of man ; that he was placed lower than the angels, and therefore might naturally be dissatisfied with his standing ; that he was artfully seduced by a fallen spirit to revolt from his Lord, and consequently if any mercy was to be enjoyed, it is asserted that man possessed the superior claim. Such reasonings are not only useless, but highly presumptuous, and hazardous. The moment that we attempt to offer reasons for the procedure of God, where he has offered none we become lost in the dark region of conjecture ; we daringly impeach his wisdom and goodness as if something was concealed by him which it is proper for us to know. Besides, if it be lawful to draw a comparison between the situation of Adam, and of the angels his appears in some respects the most eligible, and therefore his crime the most inexcusable. For aught*

nation, and equally susceptible of pleasure in his communion, and of pain under the weight of his wrath ? A part of the human family are favored with the means of salvation ; they are earnestly entreated to be reconciled unto God, and have the highest assurances that, upon their return, they shall be cordially received and everlastingly saved ; while others of the same family do not even know that a Mediator has interposed ; the scepter of mercy was never seen by their eyes ; the voice of reconciliation was never heard by their ears, but they are literally *without God, or Christ, or hope in the world.* Among those who enjoy

that we know angels were placed under an absolute law, and had the promise of happiness only while they continued to obey ; but with Adam a contract was formed and for his temporary obedience immortal blessedness was secured to him and the human race : Again, for aught that we know, Adam was more solemnly admonished against sin, than the angels. He had not only a positive command, but as a greater means of keeping his integrity unsullied the tree of life was placed before him as a visible pledge of that life with which his obedience should be rewarded, and another tree as a pledge of that evil which he should incur by transgression. But whether we contemplate the redemption of man, while the angels were passed by ; or the salvation of some men and not all men, it becomes us rather to unite in the submissive language of our Lord, even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Surely if he who searches all things, even the deep things of God resolved all into sovereignty as the eternal origin, it is wisest, it is most decent for us to imitate his example.

the same means how great is the distinction through the mere sovereignty of God ? Some, by the gentle, yet irresistible energies of his spirit, are convinced of their guilt, of their danger, and enabled to comply with the offered terms of reconciliation, while others, given up to their own blindness and enmity, become more obstinate in sin ; spurn alike the voice of terror and entreaty, and finally perish in their iniquity. All this distinction is made by him *who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, and to advance, in the view of all rational spectators, *the praise of the glory of his sovereignty*. In contemplating this *goodness and severity* of God ; his *severity* towards sinning angels, and his *goodness* to the family of man ; his *goodness* towards some men in calling and justifying, and glorifying them, and his *severity* towards others in permitting them to walk in their own ways, all created intelligencies in all parts of his dominion are now filled with more adoring conceptions of his sovereignty : They enquire with the most profound abasement, *Who hath known the mind of Jehovah ; or who hath been his counsellor ?* From the most perfect acquiescence with every part of his procedure they raise the ascription of praise, *Of him, and through him, and to him are all things : To whom be glory for ever.*

HERE mercy beams forth with a radiance the most effulgent and benign. This is a perfec-

tion of God for the exercise of which there was no room while man continued innocent. He must disobey and involve himself in misery before his Creator's compassions could be manifested in relieving him. But no sooner was he plunged into the wretchedness of his apostacy than the Lord God was moved with pity, and formed a scheme for his restoration. Nay, he prevented us with his mercy, and myriads of ages before our miseries commenced, he devised the method of our recovery. He, who beholds the end from the beginning ; to whom all events past, present, and to come, are equally obvious ; he, foreseeing from eternity the ruin of man, was moved with pity at the prospect, and proposed our future and full restoration. *The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him.* This same mercy of Jehovah is exercised, from day to day, in forgiving the iniquities of his people ; in sympathizing with them amidst all their afflictions, and in dispensing to them the consolations of the covenant under their inward darkness and disquietudes. *As a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him ; For he knoweth our frame : he remembereth that we are dust.*

THUS it is evident that particular perfections of the Godhead, which were obscurely revealed formerly, shine illustrious through the cross of Jesus, and all the divine perfections here appear

with pre-eminent glory. They are represented as not barely concurring, but cordially congratulating each other in the recovery of man by a scheme so astonishing and sublime. *Mercy and truth are met together ; righteousness and peace have kissed each other. Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven.* All the works of Jehovah praise him in a lesser or greater degree : In one part of his creation we are astonished at the display of his wisdom, in another of his bounty, in another of his power : One event in providence proclaims his justice, and another his forbearance, but in the redemption of sinners by the infinitely glorious substitute each perfection shines with a luster altogether transcendent ; they all move along hand in hand, each reflecting the highest glory on the other. *The Morning Stars sang together at the creation of this world ; they shouted for joy when the corner stone was laid, and a structure so stupendous arose at the call of the Creator : But when the mysteries of redemption are disclosed, and the WORD is made flesh, and comes to tabernacle in our world, these Sons of God tune their harps anew ; they strike a higher string, and proclaim in strains more sublime, Glory to God in the HIGHEST.* As we would readily turn away from the glimmering taper, or the light of the morning star, to behold the sun *rising in bright effulgence*, this heavenly host became indifferent to every thing else, and crowd around

the cross to behold the more luminous display of each perfection.

THE *time would fail me*; eternity itself will be no more than sufficient to explore and to recount all the excellencies of this plan. This earth, which was degraded by the ingratitude, and rebellion of man, is singularly honored by the spotless obedience of the Eternal Son: Our nature emerges from the reproach and ruin of sin, and, by its union to the divine in the person of Jesus, is raised to a degree of glory altogether ineffable. The pure seraph and cherub are nearly related to the Son of God, being *created after his image*, but the relation of redeemed sinners is incomparably more intimate. They are members of Jesus as their head, and derive all their influence and consolation from him in that relation; they are the spouse of Jesus the glorious bridegroom, and are thus favored with the most reviving pledges of his love. The angels are exalted high in heaven, and admitted to the presence of the Son, but to which of the angels has he said, *I will give to thee to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne.* Angels are employed as *ministering spirits*; they aid in the management of the church and the world, but higher honors are assigned to redeemed sinners; they are promoted to *sit upon thrones*, and are invested with *power over the nations.* Yea, know ye not, ye hun-

ble despised followers of the Lamb, *know ye not that ye shall judge angels?*

As man is now raised to a more distinguishing glory, he also participates a more abundant happiness than was forfeited by his fall. All the stores of language are exhausted to express the felicity of the heavenly world. It is pronounced *fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore*: It is represented by *living fountains of water, and by a pure river of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb*. The imagery is here so interesting and instructive that it deserves a more particular consideration; *a river* always flowing yet never emptied, nor lessened; *a pure river, clear as chrystal*, free from every tinge of pollution and suited to the refined taste of the glorified spirit; *a pure river of water of life*, vivifying every thing as it rolls along, imparting unwithering verdure to *all the trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord*; *proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*; as the source from which this river rises is infinite, *even the fulness of the God-head*, the joys of the righteous will be liable to no interruption for ever and ever.

VARIOUS circumstances will concur to enhance the future happiness of the redeemed which could not operate on man in his primitive innocence. The laborer, at the approach of evening, finds a

pleasure in looking back on the toils and dangers of the day, and each recollection of these sweetens the repose and enjoyments of the night. When, therefore, the ransomed sinner looks down from the climes of bliss, and views in retrospect the numerous evils of the present life ; when he reflects on that dreary region of hell from which he happily escaped ; that curse of the law from which he was ransomed ; on those difficulties through which he was supported ; on those enemies which he was enabled to overcome, how must the recollection heighten his joys, and excite a more grateful song to his great Deliverer ? Again, any enjoyment is enhanced by the price which it cost ; we esteem it valuable in proportion to the expence at which it was bought or the dangers we encountered in obtaining it. Such is our constitution that enjoyments are appreciated not so much from their absolute value, as from the peculiar circumstances by which they came to our possession. The Roman officer highly valued his freedom from the consideration that *with a great sum he had obtained it*. How must the joys of immortality rise in the estimation of the redeemed, when they consider that they were procured by a price immensely great ! How must their bosoms expand at the reflection that their privileges were obtained not *by silver or gold ; not by thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil, but by the PRECIOUS, PRECIOUS blood of Christ* ; that their life was ob-

tained at the expence of his death ; their crown by his cross ; their joys by his repeated exquisite sorrows ; their glory by his reproach ; their mansions in heaven by his residence in the manger upon earth ! When they turn their eyes towards the throne, and view there a *Lamb as if it had been slain* ; when they behold the lively marks of the thorns on his head ; of the spear in his side ; of the nails in his hands, and his feet ; when they reflect that all those sufferings were endured for them, the joys of heaven must become more joyous, and its glories more glorious. While the celestial worshippers proclaim, *To him that loved us*, they add with transports which none but *the spirits of the just made perfect* can feel ; which even they cannot fully utter, *and washed us from our sins in his own blood : to him be glory.*

*“ They sing Hosannah all the while,
He cheers them with eternal smiles,
Or overwhelm’d with rapture sweet,
Sink down adoring at his feet.”*

By this plan, man becomes more intimately related to man. That union which naturally subsists among them as the off-spring of one God, and the members of one great family is incomparably surpassed by their relation as *the election of the same grace*, and as the redemption of the same blood. All that ever have been, or that ever shall be reconciled to Jehovah through the mediation of Jesus are like stones of the same build-

ing ; *branches* of the same vine ; *members* of the same Head. *They being many are one body in Christ, and members one of the other.* They are redeemed by the same blood ; renewed by the same Spirit ; adorned with one robe ; interested in the same covenant ; partakers of the same consolations, and heirs of the same kingdom, and glory. In short, whatever be their colour, or country, or kindred, or language, all the ransomed are ONE with each other, even as Jesus and the Father are ONE. On earth they all live by faith on the same object *Christ and him crucified*, and they shall everlastingly encircle the same glorious throne in heaven.

By this plan, a relation the most intimate is effected between ransomed men, and elect angels. At the revolt of a particular province from their prince, all intercourse between that, and the other provinces of the realm is immediately suspended ; so at the apostacy of man from his Creator all agreeable fellowship between him, and the unfinning angels instantly ceased. These exalted spirits remaining loyal to their sovereign, become enemies to man the moment that he became hostile to their Lord : But *by the dispensation of the fulness of time*, a free intercourse is established and these jarring parties constitute one great society under Jesus Jehovah their common Ruler and Head. These blessed spirits now express the most ardent solicitude for the welfare of each be-

liever. As the dutiful child rejoices at the repentance and return of a brother who had unnaturally abandoned his father's house ; or as the loyal subject exults when one returns to his duty who had rebelled against the Prince, so the angels hail with rapture the return of apostate man. *There is joy in heaven ; there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth :* They, from that moment, protect him in danger ; they comfort him in distress, and at death convey his departing soul to the joys of immortality : *They are all ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation here, and they will forever mingle their hearts and their voices in admiring the mysteries of redemption, and the perfections of Jehovah which most luminously shine in that scheme. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders, and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God ; saying, amen : Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever.*

THUS in whatever light we contemplate the plan of reconciliation, it is obvious that, *where sin abounded, grace did much more abound :* But what finite mind can fully survey this amazing scheme, or comprehend the ten thousandth part of the glories which result from it ? Could we conceive the majesty of that law which is thereby honored ? Could we describe the splendors of

the heavenly Jerusalem, its ivory palaces, its golden streets, its pearly gates, or tell all those joys which the saved myriads of the human family shall experience through the ever revolving ages of eternity? Could we calculate all that bliss which is diffused through the various orders of angels, and thrones, and dominions, and principalities and powers at the brighter display of the divine character and perfections, or that *happiness* which these pure spirits enjoy in witnessing the encreased *happiness* of man; could we imagine the tendency of this scheme in exposing to all worlds the enormity of sin, in recommending the excellence of holiness, in vindicating the justice of Jehovah in the damnation of the fallen angels, and of men who refuse to be reconciled; Could we calculate its tendency in cementing man to man; men to angels, and all to the Uncreated, Infinite Three, as the fountain of perfection and bliss; could we fully comprehend all these consequences then we might form some conception of this scheme. But verily *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man to conceive its infinite dimensions*. New mysteries of love, and wisdom, and condescension and sovereignty will forever be disclosing to the inhabitants of heaven, and exciting their encreasing admiration and praise.

I CANNOT more suitably conclude this discourse, or this series of discourses than with an exhorta-

tion for all to acquiesce in a scheme so well ordered. *It is a faithful saying, and, without controversy, it is worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ;* But art thou profited, beloved reader, unless thy soul is interested in this salvation ? Thou hast heard that *grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life*, but what does that avail thee unless thou art numbered among its trophies ? Thou hast heard of Jesus as the Lamb in the midst of the throne ineffably glorious, but what does that avail if thine eyes shall never see him, or like *the rich man in hell only see him AFAR OFF* ? Does it profit thee to hear of the *heavenly Jerusalem* if thou art never to enter it ; of its golden streets if thou art never to walk them ; of an inheritance incorruptible, if thou art never to possess it, or a crown of glory if thy head shall never wear it ? *Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.* Here is an open fountain, whosoever will may draw near, and drink, and live for ever.

LET every heir of glory who reads these pages exult in the prospect of the speedy, and full fruition of this glory. *Abraham rejoiced to see the day of Christ, his appearance in the flesh, and was glad. Prophets enquired and searched diligently respecting the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow ; wise men from the east hastened to Bethlehem to behold the Lord of glory clothed with their nature, and they wor-*

shipped at the sight. The host of heaven came down to earth to contemplate that adorable mystery, God manifested in the flesh, and while they contemplate they ardently exclaim, glory to God in the highest: What then, O believer, must be the joy of beholding him in the light of the celestial world! What must be the ecstasies of thine heart; what the eloquence of thy lips when thou art admitted within the walls of the New Jerusalem, when thou art conducted by an escort of angels near to the throne, and thine eyes directed to the Lamb who sits effulgent in the midst of it! With what rapture inconceivable thou shalt begin that song which shall never end, Thou art worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom and honor—for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood? Unable to shew forth all his praise, with what rapture wilt thou invite attending Seraphs to aid in carrying on the burden of the song, Bless the Lord, ye his angels that excel in strength; that do his commandments; hearkening to the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord all ye his hosts; Ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord all his works in all places of his dominions.

IN the humble confidence of attaining all this blessedness, and ten thousand times ten thousand greater joys than can now be expressed, or imagined, *bless the Lord, O my Soul, AMEN.*

